



For Immediate Release:
April 28, 2014

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Christie Administration announces a \$3.7 billion program for transportation improvements in FY 15

(Trenton) – The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) has announced a proposed capital program for Fiscal Year 2015 that supports \$2.5 billion in NJDOT and other agency investments and another \$1.2 billion in NJ TRANSIT improvements, for a total program of \$3.7 billion.

The proposed capital budget focuses on safety, mobility, and maintaining assets in a state of good repair. It supports the largest project in NJDOT history – the Pulaski Skyway rehabilitation – and maintains Local Aid grants to counties and municipalities at robust levels to help ease burdens on local property taxpayers.

“This proposed program boosts investments in our roads and bridges that New Jersey residents rely upon for safe and efficient travel to work, school and other daily activities,” said NJDOT Commissioner James Simpson. “We are focusing our investment dollars on the safety, state-of-good-repair and quality-of-life improvements that make New Jersey an attractive place to raise families and establish businesses.”

“This program allows us to continue to deliver safe and reliable services to our customers while keeping the state’s transit network in a state of good repair and modernizing our bus and rail fleets,” said NJ TRANSIT Executive Director Veronique “Ronnie” Hakim. “The budget also supports our continuous focus on critical infrastructure needs in the coming years.”

The \$3.7 billion program includes \$1.6 billion in state funds, the same as last year, and \$1.5 billion in federal funds, which support a \$1.9 billion NJDOT capital program and a \$1.2 billion NJ TRANSIT program.

Another \$615 million in Port Authority of New York & New Jersey projects, included for federal reporting purposes, raises the total proposed FY 15 capital program value to \$3.7 billion, but these projects are not administered by NJDOT or NJ TRANSIT.

From the \$1.6 billion in state funds, NJDOT will receive \$1.13 billion and NJ TRANSIT will get \$470 million. From the \$1.5 billion in federal support, NJDOT will receive \$776 million, while NJ TRANSIT will get \$695 million.

NJDOT

Robust investment levels in bridges and roads have been a hallmark of the Christie Administration. The NJDOT program proposes \$305 million for roadway assets, most of which goes toward resurfacing, rehabilitation, and preservation projects, or \$64 million more than the adjusted FY 14 program. It proposes \$759 million for state and local bridge assets, or \$29 million more than the adjusted FY 14 plan.

The Department, which is responsible for 13,300 lane-miles of highways, ramps and shoulders in the state, has nearly tripled the amount total road surface rated in good condition since 2005, with 28 percent now rated good, and 58 percent rated good or fair. The Department remains on track to drive that figure to 80 percent in acceptable condition by 2021.

Significant road projects advancing in FY 15 (with total multi-year construction costs listed) include:

- \$265 million Route 35 reconstruction project on the Barnegat Peninsula in Ocean County.
- \$900 million Direct Connection project (Camden County) to improve the interchange of I-295 with I-76/Route 42. Contract 2 of 4 is expected to start this summer.
- \$73 million I-80 Parsippany-Troy Hills interchange with I-287 improvements project (Morris County) will be completed in FY 15

Investments in bridge rehabilitation or replacement projects have enabled the Department to reduce the number of NJDOT-owned structurally deficient bridges from 330 in 2010 to 293 now, or 11 percent of the 2,574 bridges owned or maintained by NJDOT.

Significant bridge projects advancing in FY 15 (with total multi-year construction costs listed) include:

- \$1 billion Pulaski Skyway rehabilitation project (Hudson County) advances with ongoing work to replace the entire 3.5-mile length of the bridge deck
- \$700 million Route 7 Hackensack River Wittpenn Bridge project (Hudson County) advances with the award of Contract 3 in early FY 15. This contract covers the construction of a new vertical lift bridge over the river 200 feet north of the existing bridge
- \$350 million Route 72 Manahawkin Bay Bridge project (Ocean County) advances with ongoing construction to build a new span parallel to the existing structure
- \$170 million Route 3 at the Passaic River Crossing project (Bergen and Passaic counties) will be completed in FY 15

The FY 15 budget also helps counties improve the condition of their bridges, with a \$25 million Local Aid program.

Local Systems Support amounts to \$411 million, virtually identical to the amount in the FY 14 program. NJDOT administers \$359 million of that total, which consists of federal and state resources. The biggest component of the NJDOT portion goes to Local Aid grants to counties and municipalities, with \$329 million being distributed through 14 grant programs.

Four key grant programs, all funded with state resources, will distribute \$190 million in FY 15. They are Municipal Aid and County Aid (\$78.75 million each), Local Bridges Future Needs (\$25 million to counties for bridge projects) and \$7.5 million for Local Aid Infrastructure Fund grants.

Programs that promote safety will receive \$111 million in funding in FY 15, up from \$103 million in the revised FY 14 plan. These funds support projects such as median crossover protection to prevent head-on collisions and safety improvements along high-risk rural roads. Some of the funding is dedicated to local governments for their safety projects.

These efforts, including Complete Streets policies that have been adopted by 90 municipalities and six counties, are aimed at reducing crashes and fatalities. Total fatalities fell 8 percent in 2013 as compared to 2012, with 544 fatalities. Pedestrian fatalities fell 18 percent, to 133, while bicyclist fatalities remained constant at 14.

NJ TRANSIT

NJ TRANSIT's \$1.2 billion FY 2015 capital program continues to prioritize investment in infrastructure to maintain an overall state of good repair, while also enhancing reliability and safety.

Highlights of the program include continued investment in rolling stock renewal, infrastructure replacement and Northeast Corridor (NEC) improvements. The NEC is allocated \$62 million in FY 2015 as part of NJ TRANSIT's ten-year, \$1 billion Northeast Corridor investment strategy that includes a new Midline Loop and station, Amtrak Joint Benefits projects and station rehabilitation at Newark Penn, Jersey Avenue and Elizabeth stations.

Funding also is provided for technology upgrades and accessibility, including construction of high-level platforms at Perth Amboy and Lyndhurst stations.

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