



## Testimony on Transportation Trust Fund Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Independent Authorities

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Oct. 4, 2010

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Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding New Jersey's transportation funding situation. My name is Jay Corbalis. I am a Policy Analyst with New Jersey Future, a smart-growth policy and advocacy organization based in Trenton. Though our organization focuses primarily on land-use in the state, we recognize that smart growth cannot happen without the necessary transportation investments to support it, and that those investments require a solvent, sustainable transportation trust fund. The current crisis confronting the trust fund is the result of years of fiscal mismanagement, under funding, and overreliance on debt, practiced by members on both sides of the aisle. This is not the first time the Trust Fund has come to the brink of insolvency, and each time we have relied on short-term Band-Aids and fiscal gimmicks to get us through. New Jersey simply cannot afford another quick fix that leaves us more debt with little to show for it. We must instead seek a long-term, sustainable resolution to the Trust Fund, one that relies less on debt, raises new revenue, and constitutionally dedicates that revenue to the fund. We call on the administration and the legislature to put aside partisan posturing and agree on a long-term solution, one that will not put us back in the same predicament next year.

On the subject of the ARC tunnel, New Jersey Future has long been a supporter of the project. Not only is it vital for the state's long-term transportation and economic needs, the better transit service enabled by the project will serve as a catalyst for the compact, transit-oriented development that will allow New Jersey to accommodate new residents sustainably while growing the economy. Treating the project as just another budget line item ignores the long-term, transformative impact this tunnel will have. The ARC tunnel is a once in a generation project that will impact New Jersey's transportation capacity, land-use patterns and economic growth for decades to come. Simply put, New Jersey must move forward with the ARC tunnel. Finally, for those who suggest that we pause and instead pursue some idealized version of the project, make no mistake; that is not an option. The current project and funding agreement is the result of 20 years of design, engineering and negotiation. Going back to the drawing board will not result in a better tunnel, it will result in no tunnel, billions in lost aid, and decades of traffic congestion, crowded trains and lost potential.

Thank you.