



STATEMENT

**Testimony on proposed
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
reform legislation**

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Senate Legislative Oversight Committee

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**Expansion of Trans-Hudson Commuting Capacity – Both Rail and Bus –
Critical to Economies of Both New Jersey and New York**

Dear members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

New Jersey Future is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that brings together concerned citizens and leaders to promote responsible land-use policies that, among other things, help provide more transportation choices beyond cars, expand access to safe and affordable neighborhoods and fuel a prosperous economy. Our testimony today focuses on those goals.

New Jersey Future has long supported transit-oriented development (TOD) as both a means of directing travel off of New Jersey's overburdened road network and onto public transportation and as an economic-development tool for towns hosting transit stations. But capturing a greater percentage of travel on transit requires that the transit system has the capacity to accommodate additional riders. Towns can't promise potential new residents (and businesses) the benefits of TOD if the buses and trains won't be able to get these new residents to jobs in Manhattan, the primary destination of transit commuters. And because demographic and market forces are currently conspiring to make transit-accessible living more desirable, New Jersey as a state stands to lose out to other metropolitan areas if its transit stations cannot be leveraged to take advantage of these pro-transit trends.

The commuter rail system is, by some reckonings, already operating at capacity in terms of the number of people it can carry across the Hudson every day to Manhattan. A new trans-Hudson commuter rail tunnel is desperately needed. The Port Authority Bus Terminal, likewise, is in need of expansion. Consider that more than 70 percent of New Jerseyans who work in Manhattan ride transit to work, roughly 40 percent by rail and a little more than 30 percent by bus. Unless the capacity of both modes is expanded, New Jerseyans seeking to fill new jobs in Manhattan will either 1) get in their cars and drive, further congesting our roads, or 2) elect not to take these jobs at all, leaving them to be filled by residents of other parts of the New York metropolitan area. Either way, New Jersey loses.

Both a new trans-Hudson rail tunnel and an expansion of the Port Authority Bus Terminal stand to benefit the economies of both New Jersey and New York. New Jerseyans get access to new jobs being created by the economic engine that is Manhattan, and New York gets access to a workforce to fill those jobs. This is more the case than ever now that the new development on Manhattan's far West Side is coming online; Hudson Yards will put additional jobs within reach of New Jersey commuters, but only if there is the sufficient capacity for them to reach those jobs by transit.

For these reasons, construction of a new trans-Hudson rail tunnel lends itself to being overseen by the Port Authority, whose purview is explicitly bi-state projects. New Jersey Future supports the prioritization of both the Amtrak Gateway rail tunnel and the expansion of the Port Authority Bus Terminal in the Port Authority's capital plan.

Thank you for your consideration.