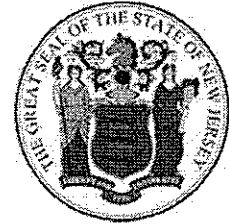




UNITED STATES SENATE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NEW JERSEY LEGISLATURE



August 11, 2016

John J. Degnan
Chairman
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
4 World Trade Center
150 Greenwich Street
New York, NY 10007

Steven M. Cohen
Vice-Chairman
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
4 World Trade Center
150 Greenwich Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chairman Degnan and Vice-Chairman Cohen:

As elected officials concerned about the future of our trans-Hudson transportation network, we are writing to express our continued support for the expeditious design and construction of a new Port Authority Midtown Bus Terminal sufficient to handle the 50 percent bus commuter growth expected by 2040.

We recognize that the Port Authority's board, executives and planning staff have already put in considerable work sifting through 20 proposals prior to last October's board meeting, when an international design competition was agreed upon, and we are looking forward to the submission of designs that are due in October, as well as the trans-Hudson capacity study that is currently underway.

We appreciate the Port Authority Board's vote this spring requiring that a new Port Authority Bus Terminal be built in Manhattan, which was based on sound transportation policy.

- The current Port Authority Bus Terminal is not only run-down and overcrowded, but also structurally deficient to meet the needs of 21st Century bus commuters. Its structural concrete platforms were not designed for a longer, taller and heavier modern bus fleet, and need to be replaced.
- Building the new bus terminal on the West Side of Manhattan is necessary to continue to provide one-seat service into Manhattan for the 110,000 weekday commuters who travel in and out of the Port Authority Bus Terminal each day – and for the 55,000 additional commuters who are expected to be using that service by 2040. Eliminating one-seat rides would add 15 to 30 minutes each way to the average commute, severely affecting the quality of life of New Jersey commuters.

- Not only do New Jerseyans benefit from this increased capacity, but New York does as well. The Bus Terminal allows for a large portion of Manhattan’s “West of Hudson” workforce to commute each day to New York and to contribute to the local and regional economy.
- Plans for the new bus terminal recognize that we need to increase our capacity on multiple transportation modes to meet commuter and employer demand, including building the new Hudson River Rail Tunnel and new Portal Bridge, and future expansion of Penn Station to provide one seat rides to tens of thousands of additional NJ Transit rail passengers, in addition to expanding PATH capacity by extending platforms, and expanding ferry service.
- We cannot consider any plan that reduces direct mass transit service to Manhattan as it would force tens of thousands of commuters back into their cars, increasing traffic congestion and delays at the Port Authority bridges and tunnels, New Jersey highways, and Manhattan city streets that are already gridlocked.
- Pushing more commuters back into their cars would not only make Manhattan traffic and air quality worse, but also add to the commute time of other New Jersey drivers, who already pay the lion’s share of the tolls borne by New Jersey and New York residents, and are bearing the brunt of the toll hikes adopted in 2011.
- Building a new bus terminal on the New Jersey side of the Hudson is a recipe for disaster because there is insufficient capacity at Penn Station for additional NJ Transit trains, and because the PATH system is already operating at full capacity. In fact, PATH has had to cancel Hoboken trains to try to cope with the growth in demand at Jersey City.

We recognize and appreciate the concerns of New York elected officials and residents concerned about making sure that their perspectives and interests are considered, and we are confident that the Port Authority will engage in a full and transparent process of public engagement – a process that began in April with the well-attended community meeting in a Hell’s Kitchen church.

We are still several months away from seeing the design competition submissions which will undoubtedly make proposals for multiple sites at which point we expect a robust and transparent process to evaluate environmental and other impacts.

We believe a juried panel of independent experts offers the best opportunity to develop a plan that meets the region’s transportation needs without undue outside influence, and we encourage you and the Port Authority board to continue the design competition that is underway.

We look forward to working closely with our colleagues in New York on an ongoing basis during the planning process.

Thank you very much for your dedicated service to the citizens of our region.

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez
U.S. Senator

Cory Booker
U.S. Senator

Bill Pascrell Jr.
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone Jr.
Member of Congress

Scott Garrett
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Leonard J. Lance
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne Jr.
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Stephen M. Sweeney
New Jersey Senate President

Loretta Weinberg
New Jersey Senate Majority Leader

Thomas H. Kean Jr.
New Jersey Senate Minority Leader

Paul A. Sarlo
New Jersey Senator

Robert M. Gordon
New Jersey Senator

Joseph M. Kyrillos Jr.
New Jersey Senator

Gordon M. Johnson
New Jersey Assemblyman

Valerie Vainieri Huttle
New Jersey Assemblywoman

Tim Eustace
New Jersey Assemblyman

Joseph A. Lagana
New Jersey Assemblyman

CC:
Governor Chris Christie
Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
Mayor Bill de Blasio
Executive Director Pat Foye
Manhattan Community Board 4
Port Authority of NY & NJ Board of Commissioners