



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

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May 27, 2020

Honorable Phil Murphy, Governor  
State of New Jersey  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625

*\*\*Transmitted via e-mail\*\**

**RE: *Proposed Toll Hikes - Veto Minutes of NJTA and SJTA***

Dear Governor Murphy:

In view of the unprecedented economic uncertainty for commuters and businesses, our Delegation is urging you in the strongest terms possible to veto the minutes of any meeting held by the New Jersey Turnpike Authority (NJTA) and/or South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA) which approve toll increases on the Garden State Parkway and the New Jersey Turnpike as well as the Atlantic City Expressway.

Please be advised that in March our Delegation wrote to Department of Transportation Commissioner Gutierrez-Scaccetti, NJTA Executive Director Keller and SJTA Authority Executive Stephen Dougherty calling on the officials to refrain from imposing the toll increases in view of the economic and financial hardships that would ensue for commuters and businesses. Further, we emphasized that the toll increases will have a chilling effect and likely exacerbate an already precarious economic situation created by COVID-19. A copy of our correspondence has been attached.

Equally infuriating has been the timing of the hearings held by the respective Authorities. Most residents are understandably largely focused on matters related to COVID-19, particularly social restrictions and economic impacts. Holding the hearings was a disservice to the public who, understandably, a large segment of who would not have been aware that the hearings were being held let alone that proposed toll increases were the topic of discussion. State residents have every right to question the state's decision to hold hearings given the unprecedented circumstances.

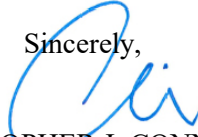
While we understand the hearings were streamed online, the public was, nonetheless, denied the opportunity to testify in person despite the serious financial implications for commuters and businesses. Individuals and businesses have been left with no choice but to put important personal and business-related matters on hold due to COVID-19 government policies. Why couldn't the Authorities postpone the hearings in the interest of transparency and basic fairness to the very people who they will wish to pay more for driving on the Parkway, Turnpike and Expressway? If imposed, the proposed toll hikes will be viewed as nothing other than a stealth tax and the process by which they were approved as a glaring example of government at its worst.

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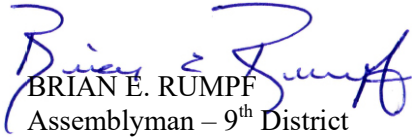
Considering all these extreme factors, we are urging you in the strongest terms, as Governor, to veto the minutes of any meeting held by the NJTA and/or SJTA which approve toll increases on the Garden State Parkway, New Jersey Turnpike and Atlantic City Expressway. Trenton should be focused on alleviating financial hardships, not increasing the cost of living and doing business in this profoundly difficult time for our state and nation.

Thank you, in advance, for your attention to this communication.

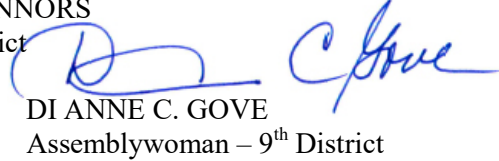
Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER J. CONNORS  
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Assemblyman – 9<sup>th</sup> District



DI ANNE C. GOVE  
Assemblywoman – 9<sup>th</sup> District

CJC/BER/DCG:js  
w/Attachments