

Gateway Program Development Corporation
Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees – May 28, 2020
Public Comments

Due to challenges related to the ongoing COVID-19 public health crisis, the May 28, 2020 GDC meeting is being held virtually via teleconference and live-streamed from GDC's website.

GDC has solicited comments from the public in advance of today's virtual meeting. A form for soliciting these comments was posted to the GDC website and Twitter page on May 14, 2020 and was available until May 26, 2020. *Comments received will be distributed to the Board, posted on the GDC website, and recorded in the public record.*

FIRST NAME	PETER
LAST NAME	FEKETE
AFFILIATION	INDIVIDUAL
COMMENT	
Love trains tunnels bridges rvl one seat ride and more	

FIRST NAME	JERRY
LAST NAME	KEENAN
AFFILIATION	NEW JERSEY ALLIANCE FOR ACTION
COMMENT	
<p>My name is Jerry Keenan. I'm the Executive Vice President of the New Jersey Alliance for Action. The Alliance for Action is an association representing thousands of government, business, labor, health care, higher education and other New Jersey leaders. Our sole mission is to promote environmentally friendly infrastructure investment to improve New Jersey's environment, economy and quality of life.</p> <p>The Alliance for Action has been a long-time advocate of building the Gateway Tunnel. In light of today's health crisis, construction of the Gateway Tunnel is MORE important than ever. Development of the Gateway Tunnel and the 100,000 construction jobs it will create will help Build Back New Jersey as we look to recover our health and our economy.</p> <p>As important as the construction jobs created by development of the Gateway Tunnel project will be, that's only the beginning. The tunnel will protect our environment by enabling commuters to get out of their cars and onto a train. It will create billions of dollars worth of future economic development in the region. It will help us compete in the world-wide economy. It will also help us avoid an economic disaster caused if one of the existing rail lines is shut down for emergency repairs.</p> <p>The commuter rail lines between New York and New Jersey carry more than 200,000 commuters each day. But they're more than 100 years old and they're stressed. A Regional Plan Association study notes that a shutdown of one of the two lines would cut train service by 75% and cost the national economy \$16 billion. It would also mean \$22 billion in lost home value.</p> <p>We're pleased to hear President Trump speaking about building the Gateway Tunnel project. We stand by ready to work with him, as well as local government, business, labor and other leaders pushing for the project to begin.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to communicate with you. Please call or email me with any questions.</p> <p>Jerry</p>	

FIRST NAME	OWEN
LAST NAME	GIBSON
AFFILIATION	INDIVIDUAL
COMMENT	
<p>When i saw the Portal bridge 3d animated video, I've noticed that there were three tracks on the alignment before narrowing down to two tracks on the bridge itself. I thought that it didn't make sense to have three tracks instead of four because than NJ Transit trains get only one track, and Amtrak trains get two or visa versa, this could cause high economic loss and delays.</p> <p>To solve this issue, I would make the alignment Four tracks along the gateway project and the rest of the route that NJ Transit trains so the NJ Transit and Amtrak trains can travel in both directions without any problems, Portal bridge needs have four tracks.</p> <p>For the tunnel I've noticed that the curve seems kind of sharp for the trains, meaning that the travel times could be increased due to slower speed, in the live stream i would like to know why the new tunnel's bypass curve is so sharp and why it can't be a more gradual curve to reduce train travel times.</p>	

FIRST NAME	BRUCE H.
LAST NAME	BERGEN
AFFILIATION	RARITAN VALLEY RAIL COALITION

COMMENT

I am the Chairman of the Raritan Valley Rail Coalition. There are more than a million residents in 28 municipalities, across four counties along the Raritan Valley Line of NJ Transit, and prior to the current crisis, there were more than 23,500 daily riders. Our goal, over the past two decades has been to seek direct service for our riders to Manhattan without the need to change trains in Newark Penn Station. Nonetheless, at this time, there are greater issues that must be dealt with before we can get back to our core mission.

Even as we deal with the public health crisis, we must realize that the economic impact must also be addressed. Public transportation systems will all face massive operating losses and will need a crucial influx of funding to continue to operate normally and help America eventually get back to work. Thereafter, proceeding with longer-term transportation capital projects can aid in the economic recovery. Certainly, the Gateway Program is one of the most important of those projects nationwide.

The Hudson Tunnel is the single point of connection in a rail system that connects places representing 20% of our nation's GDP. As reported by the Regional Plan Association, if just one of the two tunnels fails, it will shift hundreds of thousands of commuters into cars and buses, adding stress to the roadways, and slowing the passage of freight with serious economic consequences. The RPA estimates that such a shutdown would cost the U.S. at least \$16 billion in lost economic activity.

As I have said in the past, we cannot afford to continue to gamble our collective future by delaying this project any longer. The long-term recovery of the entire northeast is threatened by the failure to move forward with this project—even more so due to the current crisis. But, in order for this critical project to move ahead, the FRA must publish the Record of Decision for the EIS of the Hudson Tunnel project. Once again, we join in demanding that the Trump Administration and Transportation Secretary Chao to release the long overdue ROD, so as to allow the Gateway Project to move forward and put Americans back to work after COVID-19 has passed.

To do so is good policy in the short term, and good policy for the future.

FIRST NAME	JUSTIN
LAST NAME	PASCONE
AFFILIATION	NEW YORK BUILDING CONGRESS
COMMENT	
<p>The New York Building Congress continues to support the Gateway Program, which remains the most urgent infrastructure project in the nation.</p> <p>The New York Building Congress has, for almost a hundred years, advocated for investment in infrastructure, pursued job creation and promoted preservation and growth in the New York City area. Our association is made up of over 550 organizations comprised of more than 250,000 professionals.</p> <p>In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Building Congress believes the Gateway Program should serve as a cornerstone of the region's recovery. The program, vital to the present and future success of the Northeast Corridor (NEC), is already planned for and underway. To take advantage of that momentum, the Gateway Program must continue in earnest.</p> <p>The NEC is the most heavily used passenger rail line in the U.S., with more than 2,000 trains per day carrying approximately 800,000 daily passenger trips across eight states and Washington D.C. It serves a region that is home to 17 percent of the U.S. population and 97 Fortune 500 company headquarters, and an area that contributes 20 percent of the national GDP.</p> <p>Infrastructure investment has a history of creating jobs and strengthening the economy; improving the NEC's rail services will put people to work in the short-term and make the region more resilient and competitive in the long-term. The program adds much needed redundancy and creates new capacity, addressing the most critical operational pinch point in the railway's network.</p> <p>Understanding the building and construction industry as a powerful economic engine, the Building Congress proudly supports the Gateway Program and recognizes the potential to create jobs, strengthen the region and ensure a safe and reliable transit system.</p>	

FIRST NAME	LINDEN
LAST NAME	WALLNER
AFFILIATION	INDIVIDUAL
COMMENT	
<p>While I agree that the Gateway Program is the most urgently needed transportation project in the United States, I believe that it can and should be scaled down. Two new tubes should still be constructed underneath the Hudson River, but one of the tubes should be only used for emergency evacuations; one of the tubes should be a smaller road tunnel that will aid in emergency evacuations. If this does not happen, than another proposal I have is for the one of the two tubes to not have third rail or electric wires installed in it; this will save money and speed up the overall construction time.</p>	

FIRST NAME	MARK
LAST NAME	LONGO
AFFILIATION	ENGINEERS LABOR-EMPLOYER COOP. 825
COMMENT	
<p>By now, we know the story – the Hudson Tunnels that carry commuters, travelers, and tourists alike on the nation’s busiest rail corridor into New York are dangerously outdated. By Amtrak’s own estimates, the tunnels have only a handful of years before imminent failure, and they have long outlived their useful lives. Experts, politicians, and residents have been sounding the alarm for years. Yet despite the Gateway Project’s critical importance to the nation’s most dynamic economic region and extensive planning, construction has not begun on a replacement.</p> <p>Now more than ever, we need bold, transformational infrastructure projects to get the regional economy on the road to recovery from COVID-19. We have a chance to improve the region’s outdated infrastructure for decades to come and improve our rail systems while boosting our economy – and we should take it.</p> <p>Gateway will create thousands of good-paying jobs, and the positive ripple effects will be felt throughout industries, extending far beyond construction to reach suppliers, manufacturing, services, and more. But Gateway is also a protective measure: If we fail to take action and one or both of the current Hudson Tunnels fails – reducing capacity by 75% – the region will suffer billions of dollars in economic damage. Millions of commuters and travelers who rely on these tunnels will be stranded, jeopardizing the more than \$50 billion the Northeast Corridor generates every year.</p> <p>The Gateway project was already a necessity before the COVID-19 pandemic; experts broadly agree that it is one of the nation’s highest-priority infrastructure projects. There is broad support for the program among business, labor, and transportation groups, in addition to elected officials from both parties. Now, in light of the economic damage the pandemic has caused, infrastructure investment is a proven and safe way to catalyze economic activity with notable long-term benefits. By building for the future today, we can lift our state out of the economic challenges of the pandemic and give our residents and businesses modern 21st-century infrastructure.</p> <p>Operating engineers build the crucial systems that move people and goods across the country. We know firsthand just how important these systems are – and have seen the dire state of critical infrastructure like the Hudson River Tunnels. Gateway won’t just create work for our hardworking members; it is an investment in our future. A functioning transit system is absolutely essential to our economic recovery and the long-term viability of the region.</p> <p>Now is the time to move forward with Gateway once and for all to help rebuild our economy. Mark Longo Director, Engineers Labor-Employer Cooperative</p>	

FIRST NAME	LAURA
LAST NAME	COLACURCIO
AFFILIATION	ASSOCIATION FOR A BETTER NEW YORK
COMMENT	
<p>The Association for a Better New York supports the Gateway Project and is proud to serve as a member of the Build Gateway Now Coalition. We join our colleagues in asking the Federal Railroad Administration to issue the much-delayed Record of Decision for the Environmental Impact Statement of the Hudson Tunnel Project. As Governor Cuomo articulated during his daily press conference on Tuesday, May 26, now more than ever, the nation should look to kick-start vital infrastructure projects to help catalyze economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Gateway Project has the potential to put people back to work and improve the crucial transit link that helps to facilitate 20 percent of the nation’s economic output. We look forward to building on the positive momentum generated earlier this year with the Federal Transit Administration’s medium-high rating of the Portal North Bridge Project, a major action toward obtaining federal funding for a key piece of the larger project. The time is now to move toward replacing a 109-year-old unreliable system.</p>	

FIRST NAME	DANICA
LAST NAME	BOTTERON
AFFILIATION	INDIVIDUAL
COMMENT	
<p>Amtrak announced in February 2020 that at some point in the near future they will commence repair work on the North River Tunnels. While repair plans have yet to be finalized, it seems likely that this will prove severely disruptive to commuters from New Jersey who use NJTransit rail to travel to Penn Station. Have there been any attempts to gauge the scope of the impact to New Jersey commuters? Does the GPDC liaise with Amtrak and NJT on this issue? If so, can you concretely describe the impact that this will have to your typical NJ rail commuter? Has there been any discussion of mitigation strategies, and if so what might those be?</p> <p>Thanks for all your hard work! Danica Botteron</p>	

FIRST NAME	CHRISTOPHER
LAST NAME	BOYLAN
AFFILIATION	GENERAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF NY, INC.
COMMENT	<p>Good morning Chairman Cohen and Members of the Board. On behalf of the General Contractors Association of New York's 300 member firms and their over 25,000 professional and represented employees who build the region's heavy civil infrastructure, I'd like to make a couple of quick comments about the increasing importance of the Gateway project in this difficult and unprecedented time.</p> <p>Back in the fall of 2001, the NY/NJ/CT metropolitan region was suffering through a crisis of unimaginable proportions. While the human impact of 9-11 was felt more deeply and personally in the tri-state area, its impact nonetheless reverberated throughout the Northeast -- and beyond -- as air travel struggled to recover in the ensuing weeks and months.</p> <p>Fortunately, we were able to turn to our national rail system to link us beyond driving distance to the rest of the country, aiding us in our economic and psychological recovery. It was our limited but aging connections under the Hudson River that made it possible.</p> <p>Today we are suffering through a different crisis, for sure, but there are some similarities that also point to those tunnels as an important contributor to a successful recovery over the coming weeks and months as we await a resumption of confidence in air travel.</p> <p>Unlike 2001, however, our ability to rely on them today is far more precarious for three reasons. First, they have since celebrated over one hundred years of continuous service, far exceeding what one might consider the useful life of such structures. Second, record Northeast Corridor travel and increasingly heavy usage by New Jersey Transit commuters over the last 15-20 years has caused unanticipated wear and tear on them as they operate far beyond their original design capacity. Third -- and most troublesome -- is that they have been weakened by the inundation of corrosive salt water from 2012's Superstorm Sandy. Failure may only be a matter of a few years away.</p> <p>And while they surely need to be fixed, repairing them will take time and temporarily cripple travel along the corridor while only providing a partial, and frankly inadequate, answer for the future. The regional, the Northeast Corridor, and, yes, the national, economy need the resiliency and redundancy that the two additional Gateway tunnels would provide.</p> <p>We have obviously made this case before here at the GDC Board; with decision makers along the entire Northeast Corridor, and; most importantly, in Washington. We believe that the current crisis makes the need for Gateway even more acute. Accordingly, we will redouble our efforts to make sure that upcoming discussions in Washington, whether they be focused on emergency economic assistance, infrastructure investment, or high-speed rail initiatives, recognize the immediacy of the Gateway need.</p> <p>In that regard, we look forward to continuing to work with you, our Congressional Delegations, our colleagues from Massachusetts to Virginia, and the Administration to move Gateway beyond the concept phase and into the resiliency, recovery -- and reality -- phase. Thank you.</p>

FIRST NAME	MICHAEL
LAST NAME	SWEENEY, P.E., EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
AFFILIATION	HNTB CORPORATION
COMMENT	
<p>The employee-owners of HNTB Corporation support advancing the Gateway Program, especially now as the region battles back from the devastating effects of COVID-19.</p> <p>The need for this project is well-known and largely accepted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing North River Tunnels are more than a century old and have been badly damaged by millions of gallons of saltwater from Superstorm Sandy in 2012. If these tunnels were to fail, the economic impacts would be devastating, especially as the region tries to get back on its collective feet, which could cause lost economic activity of at least \$16 billion, lost home values of at least \$22 billion, and longer, slower commutes for nearly half a million people every workday. • Each day that passes puts the existing tunnel systems at greater risk of failure. Well over 200,000 NJ Transit and Amtrak riders commute each weekday on 450 trains over bridges, track and through a set of tunnels that are in danger of failing. • Simply patching the damage will only postpone the inevitable and will do nothing for the capacity and redundancy that the Gateway Tunnel Project will provide for the entire Northeast Corridor. • There is a real possibility that the condition of the tubes will deteriorate to the point where they need to be closed before new service is on line. At a minimum, we are likely to see an ever increasing number of unplanned outages. An economic analysis prepared for Amtrak determined that the economic benefits that would be derived from implementation of the full Gateway Program far outweigh the cost. For every dollar invested, the study suggests nearly four dollars of return. <p>Both the Gateway Tunnels and the Portal North Bridge Projects are ready to build. Moving these projects forward will be a jump-start to our economy as an army of workers is ready to begin the heavy lifting – at times, literally. The generous Federal Railroad Administration grant announced on Memorial Day to advance replacement of the Portal Bridge is a solid start, but more support is needed.</p> <p>Mobility will be increased. The region’s economy will receive a much-needed boost, putting people back to work, and affording the project with financially friendly terms that now exist partially as a result of COVID-19. Working together, we can complete these vital infrastructure projects that make our region run more efficiently and more environmentally soundly, for today and for future generations.</p> <p>The promise of a more sustainable future, more efficient cities and new job creation is too great to ignore. However, the benefits don’t stop there. Large public works projects like the Gateway Program can improve morale and bring unity and pride to whole regions. We think the entire Northeast Corridor deserves nothing less.</p> <p>Our leaders have urged all of us to build a bigger and better future. Moving ahead with Gateway Tunnels and Portal North Bridge are smart investments that will allow us to emerge from these challenging times stronger than before. But we must start by building Gateway Program now.</p>	

FIRST NAME	BRIAN
LAST NAME	ANSARI
AFFILIATION	BRIAN ANSARI & ASSOCIATES INC.
COMMENT	
<p>It is of extreme importance that MWDBE's be able to participate in this procurement in a very intentional and meaningful way.</p> <p>Threshold requirements that are unnecessary or place unreasonable burdens on our ability to participate should be reconsidered.</p> <p>In a post COVID-19 reality this project becomes even more critical to fulfill the commitment to diversity in its supply chain.</p> <p>Innovative ways of engaging MWDBE's in the procurement starting with the market sounding, into RFQ and through design and construction should be actively considered and implemented.</p> <p>In addition, having a concession for the participation of MWDBE's at the RFQ level should be assured and scored to ensure optimal MWDBE project outcomes.</p> <p>The project advisors should be challenged to come up with innovative ways to encourage participation on this project and not rely on solutions that have resulted in mixed MWDBE outcomes on other mega projects throughout the NYC Metro area.</p> <p>Integrity monitors should be considered and outreach plans and proposals that define the shortlisted teams MWDBE strategy should be required by Gateway prior to shortlisting any teams that would seek to bid on this project.</p> <p>The operational structure of Gateway should allow for the smooth and efficient decision making process related to all areas of procurement to ensure consistent communication and efficiency of process.</p>	

FIRST NAME	FELICIA
LAST NAME	PARK-ROGERS
AFFILIATION	TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN
COMMENT	
<p>It has now been over two years since the FRA was expected to publish the Record of Decision for the EIS of the Hudson Tunnel project. We respectfully ask the Trump Administration and Secretary Chao to work to release the Record of Decision (ROD) to allow the project to move forward and put Americans back to work after COVID-19 has passed. Now is the perfect time to take the necessary steps for moving this sorely needed infrastructure project forward as it has the potential to be a key piece of our nation's economic recovery.</p> <p>First, we can not risk further delays. Each day that passes puts the existing tunnel at greater likelihood of failure. Before COVID-19, over 200,000 NJ Transit and Amtrak riders commuted each weekday on 450 trains over bridges, track and through a tunnel that is 108 years old and slowly failing. We see this in delays that plague the system, during normal time when it is running beyond capacity and with the resultant long stretches of repair work that have previously been required. It will only become worse without intervention and new tunnels to spread the train capacity. This is a public safety concern as well as an economic one. What if people are hurt on a grand scale?</p> <p>Secondly, our society is facing the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. As we look to ramp our economy back up post-COVID-19, the Gateway Tunnel is a perfect springboard for adding jobs and stimulating recovery efforts. This stimulus will not just be regional as the tunnel is the vital link in a rail system that connects regions representing 20% of our nation's GDP and linking the entire Northeast corridor. If, on the other hand, the current Hudson River Tunnel fails, we will see commuters shift into cars and buses, adding stress to the roadways, slowing the passage of freight with serious economic consequences, and costing the economy millions of dollars in lost labor time. Lack of repair, or failure of the tunnels, risks further depressing the economy and slowing our recovery.</p> <p>Third, given the current (but temporary) reductions in commuting, the time is ripe to launch this project as there will be fewer disruptions to riders and business. We are likely to have cost and time savings in the project's construction. New, safe, reliable tunnels will encourage the return of commuters and confidence of business in the region and speed our recovery.</p> <p>The Gateway Project is critical to our economic recovery and the need and the reasons to act urgently are greater than ever. Thank you.</p>	

FIRST NAME	BRIAN
LAST NAME	FRITSCH
AFFILIATION	REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION
COMMENT	
<p>I'm Brian Fritsch, Campaign Manager for the Build Gateway Now Coalition. Build Gateway Now is a coalition of over 40 civic, labor, business, and elected groups from who know Gateway is the nation's most urgent infrastructure project and an absolutely vital one for the health of the already fragile regional and national economies.</p> <p>Since the last GDC board meeting, the Build Gateway Now coalition has been very active supporting the project in a variety of ways, including a press conference at Penn Station, press releases, new original research, discussions with Congressmembers and their staffs in D.C., continued social media engagement, and a variety of other work. We were very pleased to see key parts of the project, especially the positive news regarding the Portal North Bridge, move forward during this time period.</p> <p>However, during this unprecedented health crisis that our nation faces, it has been clear that we cannot continue doing business as usual. As GDC partner organizations face massive operating losses as ridership necessarily plunges for the sake of public safety, we strongly believe in the need for another influx of operational funding to the agencies to continue to allow our mass transit systems to function safely and get essential workers to and from their needed jobs.</p> <p>For New York and New Jersey to function and help the region get back to work, we know we must lend the agencies our support. That's why the coalition has been busy organizing sign-on letters, contacting legislators, and speaking to the press about the critical need for another round of federal assistance in the near-term. We recently authored a report, entitled Essential Service, which documents the bad options regional transit systems have if they do not receive emergency operating aid from Congress.</p> <p>But we cannot stop with just operating relief. We believe that the Gateway Program is uniquely situated to be the cornerstone of an infrastructure stimulus bill that can help get the national economy back on track following the pain and misery caused by the Coronavirus. As we begin to recover, the need to ensure the free flow of people and business that's linked to 20% of the nation's economy will never be greater. We will not be secure in our economic future without a new tunnel under the Hudson River. Without it, there will always be a risk that the existing tunnel will reach the end of its useful life, and a key tie under the Hudson will be severed. We must act now.</p> <p>Many thanks to the members of the GDC Board for your service and the opportunity to submit public comment.</p>	

FIRST NAME	JOSEPH M.
LAST NAME	CLIFT
AFFILIATION	INDIVIDUAL

COMMENT

It's past time for GDC Board members to stop listening to their bigger-is-always-better Transportation-Industrial-Complex advisors and seek new guidance on advancing a cost-effective Gateway Program that reflects today's "new normal." There never was money to afford the bloated \$30 billion plan developed by these proverbial foxes GDC has been paying to guard the hen house, but now, with severely reduced fuel tax and highway toll revenues identified to support \$15 billion Gateway Phase 1, the plan is even more unaffordable and **MUST BE CHANGED**. Otherwise, GDC is simply throwing more good money after bad.

The Phase I goal of eliminating single-point-of-failure problems has been achieved for Portal Bridge and can be achieved for the Hudson Tunnel by using L-Train cable racking now, without building new tunnels first. Now, it's time to plan an affordable Phase II that increases peak-hour trans-Hudson train capacity ASAP!

Excerpts from two Daily News editorials **FOR THE RECORD**:

Tuesday- **"Build it better: How to do the overblown Gateway project right:**

Today is the last chance to submit public comments for Thursday's virtual meeting of the NY-NJ GDC. Expect the Gov. Cuomo-named "transportation industrial complex," seeking to waste \$30 billion on Amtrak's elaborate trans-Hudson rail fantasy, hitting the 500-word limit. We'll do it in half that.

Hold off digging a new tunnel, still exorbitantly pegged at \$9.5 billion. Capacity is no longer an issue, as the coronavirus has eliminated commuting into Manhattan and it won't, if ever, get back to the pre-virus levels for a long time. Also, Amtrak, NJ Transit and the Port Authority, as well as Albany and Trenton, are flat broke.

Repair the existing tubes, soaked by the last disaster, Superstorm Sandy. Rather than an expensive \$1.8 billion gut rehab years from now after a new tunnel opens, repair it in place now at a fraction of the cost. The GDC is sitting on a study commissioned from London Bridge Associates proving L-train-style cable racking works. U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao has committed Amtrak to racking.

Gateway's other Phase 1 component is a wasteful new Hackensack River \$1.8 billion Portal North Bridge. The law says each state "shall provide equal funding for phase one of the Project." Save New York money and shift from a two-track high crossing to a four-track, low movable span at one-tenth the price. Cuomo put ace bridge-building engineer Jamey Barbas on GDC's board. She erected the new Tappan Zee under budget and ahead of schedule. Do likewise with a slimmed-down Portal.

Wednesday- **"Money for something: The feds should support worthy New York infrastructure projects,"** regarding Governor Cuomo's planned White House meeting with President Trump:

Cuomo wants federal buy-in on three projects. . . Two, fixing Amtrak's Superstorm Sandy-flooded tubes. We note that Cuomo didn't mention "Gateway," Amtrak's \$30 billion boondoggle. Instead, the governor should sell Trump on using L-train style repairs to fix not just the Hudson tubes, but the East River too, saving years and billions, and plan any new tunnel using the much cheaper European method.

FIRST NAME	SALLY JANE
LAST NAME	GELLERT
AFFILIATION	LACKAWANNA COALITION

COMMENT

The Lackawanna Coalition has long considered the Portal North Bridge Project to be an expensive solution looking for a problem, and with the Coast Guard agreeing to time restrictions on the now-mostly-theoretical marine traffic, we feel that our position has been justified. We agree on the need for Hudson Tunnel repair and, likely, an additional single-track tunnel, though in the strange new work-from-home-if-you-can world in which we find ourselves, we expect that future rush hour/peak demand for transit will be decreased, with more commuting reduced and spread over more hours. We encourage all involved to put expansion plans on hold until we understand long-term effects and to look, not for the biggest project of which we can conceive, but for projects making the most efficient use of public funds—i.e., the taxes of We the People, distributed from the federal government. In that spirit, we have supported the Canarsie-tunnel repairs, completed on time and within budget, and called for an evaluation of the same method in the Hudson tunnels. We are particularly pleased to see U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Elaine Chao agree with us.

In this spirit, I refer you to Lackawanna Coalition Chairperson/*Railway Age* Contributing Editor David Peter Alan’s 10-part “Gateway series” in that publication; all articles in the series are posted at www.railwayage.com. The specific titles of and links to the most recent parts are listed here:

- **Part 7: A Misleading Analysis of Delays, A New Commission, and A New Obstacle to Funding** (posted August 19, 2019): <https://www.railwayage.com/passenger/part-7-a-misleading-analysis-of-delays-a-new-commission-and-a-newobstacle-to-funding/?RAchannel=home>
- **Part 8: The Existing Tunnels May Fail First** (posted December 30, 2019): <https://www.railwayage.com/passenger/intercity/part-8-the-existing-tunnels-may-fail-first/?RAchannel=home>
- **Part 9: Chao Calls for Expedited Hudson Tunnels Repair. Could USDOT Be Listening to Us?** (posted February 27, 2020): <https://www.railwayage.com/passenger/part-9-chao-calls-for-expedited-hudson-tunnels-repair-could-usdot-belisting-to-us/?RAchannel=home>
- **Part 10: Portal North Gets Passing Grade; Hudson Tunnel Flunks Again** (posted March 13, 2020): <https://www.railwayage.com/passenger/commuterregional/part-10-portal-north-gets-passing-grade-hudson-tunnel-flunks-again/?RAchannel=home>

The last post mentioned, Part 10, includes an additional report, following the main article, entitled **Background Report: A No-Longer-Needed Bridge Over No-Longer-Troubled Waters.**

*Sally Jane Gellert
Legislative Director
Communications Director
Lackawanna Coalition*