

GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
May 12, 2021

Public Comments Received as of 5pm on May 11, 2021

*The public is encouraged to submit public comments via the comment form on
www.GatewayProgram.org.*

*Comments received prior to the end of the meeting will be distributed to the Board, posted on
the GDC website, and recorded in the public record.*

Name	Renaë Reynolds
Organization	Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Comment Topic	The Gateway Program
<p>Good afternoon,</p> <p>My name is Renaë Reynolds and I am the new Executive Director of Tri-State Transportation Campaign. TSTC is a 27-year old non-profit organization fighting for cleaner, fairer, and more accessible transportation options that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the economies of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.</p> <p>Congress must act swiftly to make major infrastructure investments, like Amtrak's Gateway Program, which will improve reliability of our rail network and bolster the region's and nation's economy. With traffic congestion on pace to exceed pre-pandemic levels, we must act now to avoid going back to the days of overcrowded trains and regular, extensive service delays due to antiquated infrastructure.</p> <p>Thank you to President Biden and Secretary Buttigieg for helping us to advance the Gateway Program to the next phase and we look forward to the publishing of the Record of Decision on the Hudson Tunnel Environmental Impact Statement by the end of this month. There has never been a more urgent time to modernize our rail infrastructure and expand rail capacity to handle present and future demand.</p> <p>The Gateway Program is a once-in-a-century project that will fix one of the busiest and most fragile segments of the Northeast Corridor, which connects 20% of our nation's GDP. We have to be proactive instead of waiting for the next big infrastructure failure.</p> <p>Congress must also establish a more reliable and dedicated funding source for rail programs of regional and national significance. Current federal funding sources are too limited in scope and place an undue burden on states and localities to fund the majority of transportation projects that have a big impact on the national economy.</p> <p>The Gateway Program will play a big role in the region's pandemic recovery. Construction of the Hudson Tunnel project alone is projected to create 17,000 jobs and generate \$19 billion in economic activity, while the Portal North Bridge will create another 11,600 jobs. The days of putting off our investments and playing catch up when it's too late have to end now. Each day that this project is delayed adds \$1.2 million in inflation to the project's overall cost. Congress must act now to make this critical investment before it requires an even greater investment for the same product.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	

Name	Brian Fritsch
Organization	Build Gateway Now Coalition
Comment Topic	Congress must support the Gateway Program
<p>Hello, I'm Brian Fritsch, Campaign Manager for the Build Gateway Now Coalition. Build Gateway Now is a coalition of over 45 civic, labor, business, and elected groups. Our coalition strongly believes that the Gateway Program is the nation's most urgent infrastructure project and essential to the long-term vitality of the New York City region.</p> <p>I would like to start my comments by thanking President Biden and Secretary Buttigieg for partnering with the Gateway Development Commission to advance the Gateway Program. We look forward to seeing a Record of Decision (ROD) on the Hudson Tunnel Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) by the end of this month. It has been well over three years since the Draft EIS was submitted and we were pleased to finally be able to stop our count-up clock marking the time to a new deadline when the U.S. Department of Transportation indicated a ROD was forthcoming. The importance of completing a ROD cannot be overstated, as it will allow vital pre-construction work, such as property acquisition, to begin.</p> <p>To improve reliability and quality of life for commuters and travelers, Congress must act and make major investments in our rail infrastructure, including building the Gateway Program. Not only is the American Jobs Plan essential in rebuilding our outdated and crumbling infrastructure, but we also need a surface transportation reauthorization that will finally put rail infrastructure on par with highway infrastructure, and recognize that both have a key role to play in moving people safely and efficiently.</p> <p>Although the pandemic has disrupted commuting and traveling patterns for millions, rail continues to be the best and most sustainable moving large numbers of people quickly. Post-pandemic we simply can't go back to the old days of overcrowded trains and massive delays due to old and failing infrastructure, and Congress must invest in our future.</p> <p>To that end, we must also find better ways to fund rail programs of regional and national economic significance. While current federal funding sources are available for infrastructure rebuilding, they are too limited in their scope. They create an undue burden on localities to fund the majority of transportation projects that have a substantial impact on the national economy, unlike funding sources for interstate highway projects. To highlight these points, the coalition sent a letter to DOT outlining our concerns and potential solutions. We will be following up with the Federal Railroad Administration to discuss this matter in more detail shortly.</p> <p>Many thanks to the members of the Gateway Development Commission for your continued service, and for the opportunity to submit our public comment to you today. We look forward to continuing to move the Gateway Program forward to promote health and prosperity for all.</p>	

Name	Laura Colacurcio
Organization	Association for a Better New York (ABNY)
Comment Topic	Support for Gateway Program
<p>The Association for a Better New York (ABNY) continues to support investments in infrastructure to support an equitable and inclusive economy for the New York City region. It is imperative that the Gateway Program move forward to improve the reliability and quality of life for commuters, travelers, and all who utilize this critical regional rail link. The Gateway Program is an investment in the future of our region, and in the near-term, construction for the Hudson Tunnel and Portal North Bridge projects will create an estimated 28,600 jobs combined during a crucial period of economic recovery. In addition, ABNY urges Congress to unlock federal funding sources to finance transportation projects of substantial regional and national significance, such as the Gateway Program. We are grateful to President Biden and Secretary Buttigieg for prioritizing the Gateway Program, and we are eager to see the forthcoming Record of Decision on the Hudson Tunnel Environmental Impact Statement after prior delays have caused the project's overall costs to soar.</p>	

Name	Tom Bracken
Organization	NJ State Chamber of Commerce
Comment Topic	Gateway
<p>To improve reliability and quality of life for commuters and travelers, we need Congress to make major investments in infrastructure, including building the Gateway Program. Post-pandemic we simply can't go back to the old days of overcrowded trains and massive delays due to failing infrastructure, Congress must invest in our future now.</p> <p>Gateway is an investment in the future of our region for the next 100 years; rehabilitating and expanding the busiest section of the Northeast Corridor connecting 20% of our nation's GDP. We cannot allow these critical pieces of our transportation network to reach a point where they need to be taken out of service.</p> <p>Gateway is critical for the economy's recovery from the pandemic. Construction of the Hudson Tunnel project alone has been projected to create 17,000 jobs and \$19B in economic activity, while the Portal North Bridge will create another 11,600 jobs. There has never been a better time to invest in the future of our region. We have already delayed far too long in acting on this project and every day of additional delay adds \$1.2 million in inflation to the project's overall cost.</p> <p>Additionally, as we recover and rebuild New Jersey's economy, Gateway will play a significant role in making our state more attractive as a place to work and live.</p>	

Name	Mike Makarski
Organization	Elec 825
Comment Topic	GDC Meeting
Video:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFgAevSb0oc