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FIRST HUDSON TUNNEL PROJECT TUNNEL BORING MACHINE BEGINS MINING

Successful Launch Marks On-Time Start of Tunnel Boring



The first tunnel boring machine building the northern tunnel tube started mining in New Jersey.

[Video footage and photos of the tunnel boring machine launch are available here.](#) Please credit “Gateway Development Commission (GDC)” as the source.

Newark/New York – The Gateway Development Commission (GDC) today announced that the Hudson Tunnel Project’s first tunnel boring machine has begun mining on schedule. A second tunnel boring machine will launch in the coming weeks.

These two machines will build the first 5,100 feet of the new rail tunnel tubes in New Jersey, from the tunnel portal in North Bergen to the Hudson County Access Shaft on the border of Weehawken and Hoboken. When they reach the access shaft, they will be removed and replaced with a second pair of machines designed for the mixed ground conditions under the Hudson River.

These tunnel boring machines are expected to build roughly 30 feet of tunnel per day, including scheduled pauses for maintenance. It will take approximately one year to build this section of the tunnel tubes.

Alicia Glen, New York GDC Commissioner and Co-Chair, Balpreet Grewal-Virk, New Jersey GDC Commissioner and Co-Chair, and Tony Coscia, GDC Amtrak Commissioner and Vice Chair, said in a joint statement, “Before our tunnel boring machine started digging, it had been nearly 120 years since the last train tunnel under the Hudson River was excavated. We are far overdue for an upgrade, and the hundreds of thousands of riders who deal with the fallout from train delays know it. With the start of tunnel boring operations, we showed that we are taking action to deliver the modern infrastructure America needs. We’re grateful for the many partners whose

support has enabled us to reach this milestone and committed to continuing to push forward until the job is done.”

GDC Chief Executive Officer Tom Prendergast said, “When the first tunnel boring machine’s cutterhead bit into the rock face in the launch box, GDC reached the most significant Hudson Tunnel Project delivery milestone to date on schedule. This is a major achievement that would not have been possible without the hundreds of people who have worked together to plan, design, and build the infrastructure and equipment needed for this incredible machine to do what it was made to do. GDC, our partners, and the workers on our construction sites will continue to bring the same dedication and grit that enabled us to reach this key milestone on schedule to the project every day until we deliver the reliable rail system Americans deserve.”

The tunnel boring machine that launched and the second machine that will launch later this fall are single shield machines designed to efficiently tunnel through hard, dry rock. They each have a 28-foot, 8-inch-diameter cutterhead and trailing gantries that extend roughly 500 feet and weigh more than 1,680 tons.

The tunnel boring machine excavates and builds the tunnel at the same time. Its spinning cutterhead is pressed against the rock face. As it turns, disc cutters embedded in the cutterhead break the rock into chips. Buckets collect the excavated rock and direct it through the machine’s muck ring onto a conveyor belt, which carries the material out the back of the machine for removal from the tunnel.

As the tunnel boring machine advances, an erector arm places precast concrete segments to form the permanent tunnel lining. Hydraulic thrust jacks brace against the completed lining to push the machine forward.

The Hudson Tunnel Project is separated into ten construction packages. This stretch of tunnel boring and construction of the Hudson County Access Shaft are part of the [Palisades Tunnel Project](#) package. Schiavone Lane Dragados JV is leading construction of this package, with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey managing project delivery in partnership with GDC.

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The [Gateway Development Commission](#) is the bi-state public authority overseeing delivery of the Hudson Tunnel Project.

The Hudson Tunnel Project is an urgent investment in the nation’s passenger rail infrastructure that will improve transportation up and down the East Coast, create hundreds of thousands of jobs, and strengthen the national economy for decades to come by building a new rail tunnel connecting New Jersey and New York and rehabilitating the existing North River Tunnel.

The Hudson Tunnel Project is the cornerstone of the Gateway Program, a comprehensive rail investment program that will modernize rail travel and create new capacity for the most congested section of the Northeast Corridor.