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Office of the Governor
NEWS RELEASE

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Gov. Christie Whitman has signed the following pieces of legislation:

A-1673, appropriates \$205 million from the \$500 million 1999 Statewide Transportation and Local Bridge Fund approved by the voters in November. A total of \$125 million of the \$205 million is allocated for grants to local governments to repair or rebuild structurally deficient bridges carrying county or municipal roads. A local match is not required to access these funds. The balance of the \$205 million -- \$80 million -- is allocated to NJ Transit for critical mass transit projects, including the rehabilitation of the Bergen Tunnel, projects at the Hoboken Terminal and the new Union Station on the Raritan Valley Line.

The bill also reappropriates unexpended balances from the 1983 and 1989 bridge bond funds back to the counties to which the money was originally appropriated. A balance of \$8.5 million remains unspent from the 1983 bridge bond fund, and a balance of \$21.3 million remains unspent from the 1989 bridge bond fund. These funds remain unexpended because of the local match requirements that were placed upon the counties to use the funds. This bill, in addition to reappropriating the funds back to the counties, eases the local match requirements in order to make the remaining funds more accessible.

The legislation was sponsored by Assembly Members Alex DeCroce (R-Essex/Morris/Passaic) and Francis L. Bodine (R-Atlantic/Burlington/Camden) and Senators Andrew R. Ciesla (R-Monmouth/Ocean) and Diane B. Allen (R-Burlington/Camden).

A-47, amends the Garden State Preservation Trust Act. The bill clarifies that the \$200 million total annual spending cap for open space and farmland preservation projects approved by the Garden State Preservation Trust applies only to funding appropriated from the Garden State Green Acres Preservation Trust Fund and the Garden State Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, and not to funding provided from prior Green Acres bond acts. The legislation was sponsored by Assembly Members Steve Corodemus (R-Monmouth) and John C. Gibson (R-Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland) and Senators Henry P. McNamara (R-Bergen/Passaic) and Donald T. DiFrancesco (R-Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union).