

Office of the Governor
NEWS RELEASE

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**Governor Signs Transportation Trust Fund Bill Providing
\$3.75 Billion for Road and Transit Projects Through 2004**

Governor Christie Whitman today signed legislation to renew the Transportation Trust Fund and provide \$3.75 billion for road and mass transit projects during the next four years making roads safer, commutes easier and the State more livable-all without raising state taxes.

"Transportation projects benefiting New Jersey for decades to come will happen because of the bill I sign today," said Gov. Whitman during a tour of a major road construction project for Routes 21 and 46 nearing completion in Passaic County.

"Once again, we are investing New Jersey's prosperity dividend to ensure a bright future for our families," said the Governor. "We are adding another four years to the life of the Transportation Trust Fund without asking for the moon or making you pay more at the pump."

The legislation renews the Transportation Trust Fund creating a four-year program with annual spending authorizations of \$900 million for State Fiscal Year 2001 and \$950 million for State Fiscal Years 2002 through 2004. The legislation calls for the constitutional dedication of two sources of existing tax revenue to support the Trust Fund that must be approved by New Jersey voters in this November's election: one from the petroleum products receipts tax and one from sales tax revenue on new motor vehicles. The measure does not impose any new tax or increase any existing tax.

"With those dollars, we will fix those parts of our infrastructure that need repair," said Gov. Whitman. "We will strengthen our bridges. We will focus on decreasing highway accidents. We will carry out vital projects like the Route 21 freeway here in Passaic County. We will, as I promised, greatly increase bike paths throughout the state."

Gov. Whitman thanked the sponsors of the bill, S-16, for their leadership on this encompassing measure including: Senators Donald T. DiFrancesco (R-Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union), Richard J. Codey (D-Essex) and Assemblymen Alex DeCroce (R-Essex/Morris/Passaic), Joseph V. Doria (D-Hudson), Francis L. Bodine (R-Atlantic/Burlington/Camden) and Richard A. Merkt (R-Morris).

"Smart growth means reducing congestion without paving over every inch of open land," said Gov. Whitman. "Smart growth means working with businesses to help reduce single-

occupancy car trips, and with community leaders to design highways appropriate for town centers."

The bill also creates a "Congestion Buster Task Force" to study highway traffic congestion in the State and to develop a commuter options plan that would address methods to cap vehicle trips during peak travel times at 1999 levels. The task force also would identify the top 10 projects that can be implemented quickly to relieve congestion and improve safety. Also, the legislation directs the NJ Commerce and Economic Growth Commission to prepare a report about identifying sectors of the economy that are appropriate for telecommuting.

"We know that a sturdy transportation network, especially in a corridor state like New Jersey, is crucial to a strong economy," the Governor noted. "This legislation serves our commitment to economic strength-building on efforts that have already added more than 420,000 jobs to the economy since 1994. But in addition to making New Jersey a better place in which to work, this bill will also make it a better place in which to live and raise a family."

The legislation includes a goal of constructing an additional 1,000 miles of bike lanes in five years. Also, the measure directs New Jersey Transit to present a strategy and preliminary timetable for the replacement of the current diesel bus fleet with buses that have reduced emissions.

Several other areas the legislation addresses include: providing incentives to encourage a reduction in single occupancy trips; planning for traffic in residential areas, town centers and future town centers; improving the safety or mitigating adverse impacts of large truck on State and local roads; and, establishing or expanding at least two park-and-ride facilities each year.

The Governor conditionally vetoed the bill on June 29, 2000 to amend the salary and overhead expenditure cap related to capital projects that would be imposed on the Department of Transportation and New Jersey Transit, and to delete a provision that could limit New Jersey Transit's ability to create reasonable and necessary competition with private bus carriers when initiating future State transportation projects. The State Senate concurred with the Governor's recommendations on June 29, 2000 and the State Assembly concurred on July 13, 2000.

"I'm proud that in renewing the Transportation Trust Fund, we will make our roads safer, our commutes easier, and our state more livable," said Gov. Whitman. "To rework a phrase from Neil Armstrong, this may be just one more step for our Trust Fund, but it's a giant leap for our state into the 21st century."

The Route 21 Freeway Project involves three phases along the Passaic River in Clifton and Passaic that costs nearly \$100 million, including \$44.5 million from the State Transportation Trust Fund and \$54.65 million from the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act funds. Portions of the Route 21 and 46 freeway extensions,

upgrades and access ramps have already been completed with final work expected to end December 2000.