

The Bayonne Bridge Project

Creating Jobs Now and Securing Our Future



By David Samson
Chairman, The Port Authority
of New York & New Jersey

At a time when elected officials and administrators at every level of government across the country are looking for ways to make investments in our infrastructure and create jobs to reenergize our stalled economy, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's project to "Raise the Roadway" of the Bayonne Bridge will achieve both objectives.

The Raise-the-Roadway project became a Port Authority priority when the Government of Panama approved the expansion of the Panama Canal to enable it to accommodate larger cargo ships. That expansion holds the potential for substantial economic benefits for our region by significantly increasing the efficiency of moving freight, lowering costs for both shippers and consumers, and shrinking the

environmental footprint of our Port commerce. The larger post-Panamax ships will carry up to 15,000 TEU containers, compared with the current maximum of 5,000 TEUs. The resultant economies of scale will produce fewer ships using our waterways to deliver similar amounts of cargo.

We expect construction on the Raise-the-Roadway project to begin in the spring of 2013, and the Port Authority expects this \$1 billion project to create more than 6,300 good-paying jobs in the construction trades. We estimate those jobs will generate \$380 million in wages, \$1.6 billion in economic activity during construction, and significant economic benefits to local businesses and service providers.

These benefits will be realized if we take the steps now to accommodate the larger ships that will dominate the



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shipping industry after the opening of the widened Canal. These steps are necessary because the existing 151-foot air draft under the Bayonne Bridge, designed nearly 80 years ago, is unable to accommodate the larger ships. As a result, without the planned improvements, post-Panamax ships would be unable to reach Port Newark and Elizabeth Seaport and Howland Hook on Staten Island. Without an elevated roadway, cargo shippers would be forced to use older, smaller ships, which are less efficient, more expensive to operate, and not equipped with the latest green technologies that can be used by the new, larger ships that will be built to take advantage of the widened Panama Canal.

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We faced a clear choice: raise the Bayonne Bridge roadway or allow our region to risk becoming less competitive with other East Coast areas served by modernized ports, such as Norfolk, Savannah, and Halifax.

The Port Authority's solution is an innovative construction project that will raise the Bayonne Bridge roadway 64 feet, to a height of 215 feet above the Kill Van Kull, one of the busiest shipping lanes in the nation. The construction plan allows for construction of a new, elevated roadway while keeping the bridge open to traffic. Vehicles will continue to cross the Bayonne Bridge with minimal disruption and road closures, and ships will continue to pass underneath it. Once the new roadway is in place above the

existing road, workers will remove the original deck below. That construction sequence will make the Bayonne Bridge the first bridge to complete a full deck replacement above an existing deck while remaining open to vehicular and maritime traffic.

Earlier this year, the Panama Canal Authority announced that construction delays have slowed the expansion project. Work will not be completed until the first quarter of 2015; and then an additional 6-8 months of trials and tests will follow before the Canal is commercially operational and open to shipping. At the same time as this announcement, the Port Authority has been fast-tracking the Raise-the-Roadway project. In fact, just last month we announced the deck-removal portion of the project will be completed in late 2015—six months ahead of schedule and in time for our ports to receive the larger ships that will pass through the completed Canal.

We completed preliminary engineering in 2011, pre-qualified five world-class construction teams seeking to bid on the project, and are now in the

process of making the selection. The Raise-the-Roadway project also got a boost from the Obama Administration, which last month announced federal review will be expedited since the Bayonne Bridge is a regionally significant infrastructure project.

It is imperative that we complete this project in advance of commercial operations at the widened Panama Canal. By providing the necessary navigational clearance that enables larger post-Panamax ships to access our marine terminals, we will ensure that the Port of New York and New Jersey remains a powerful driver of our region's economy for years to come.

Make no mistake, ports up and down the East Coast are racing to prepare for the Panama Canal expansion for all the same reasons. There is intense competition for the new large ships sailing from Asia. That is why this project is so important. This bridge project will help ensure that we maintain our competitive advantage and continue to support the economic vitality of the New York-New Jersey region. ▲

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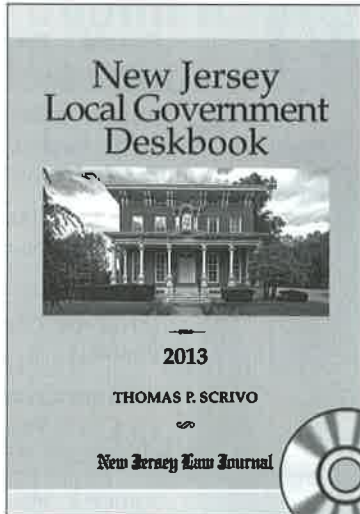

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