



## News release

Media contact: Tom Feeney  
732-750-5333  
feeney@turnpike.state.nj.us

### **Christie Administration Announces Next Phase of Garden State Parkway Widening**

WOODBIDGE, April 15, 2011 -- The Christie administration announced today that the widening of the Garden State Parkway between milepost 30 in Somers Point and milepost 63 in Stafford Township has been accelerated in an effort to bring congestion relief to a highway that serves as a critical link for commuters, tourists and residents of communities along the Jersey Shore.

Since the Christie Administration took office, the Governor and Transportation Commissioner James Simpson have urged Turnpike Authority officials to scrutinize every detail of the 10-year, \$7 billion capital program adopted in 2008 to assure that the money is being spent on projects that will bring the best bang for the buck. Because of that process, the Turnpike Authority was able to find the money to fund the next phase of the Parkway widening by reprioritizing projects in the capital budget. The project will be advanced without any increase to the overall cost of the capital program.

“Part of protecting the public’s money is making sure that capital funds are spent on projects that make the most sense,” the Governor said. “And here we have a project that makes sense. One new lane in each direction on this congested part of the Parkway will mean less time sitting in traffic for the residents who depend on the road every day. It will mean a smoother trip for families from other parts of our New Jersey whose regular visits to the Shore are vital to the regional economy. And it will mean expanded capacity on a road that would serve as a critical evacuation route in the event of a coastal storm or other emergency. “

Since 2008, the Turnpike Authority has had the necessary environmental permits to add a third lane in each direction from milepost 30 in Somers Point to milepost 80 in Toms River. There was funding in the capital program only for construction of the first phase of the widening from Stafford Township to Toms River and for the widening and rehabilitation of the Mullica River, Bass River and Patcong Creek bridges.

“Construction on the first phase is almost done, and drivers should be enjoying the benefits of the wider road by Memorial Day,” said Commissioner Simpson, who serves as Chairman of the Turnpike Authority Board of Commissioners. “By carefully managing the capital program, we’re going to be able to extend those same benefits to communities south of Stafford Township sooner than expected.”

A Turnpike Authority contractor has recently cleared trees from the Parkway right-of-way between mileposts 30 and 64. That work was done both to maintain a safe clear zone alongside the road and to prepare for the second phase of the widening. The tree removal is complete. The contractor is currently seeding and mulching in the project area.

The Turnpike Authority is obligated under the No Net Loss Reforestation Act to compensate for the trees

that needed to be removed during the project. The Authority is working with the Department of Environmental Protection to determine the appropriate method of mitigating the loss of trees resulting from the widening.

Final design for the second phase is nearly complete, and the Turnpike Authority expects to solicit bids for the first construction contract by June. The second phase will add a third lane in each direction between milepost 48 in Port Republic and milepost 63 and provide grading and drainage improvements between mileposts 30 and 48. A third lane in each direction will be added between mileposts 30 and 48 in subsequent phases.

“This work will offer an important boost to the local economy by creating construction jobs and improving access to points along the Jersey Shore,” said Turnpike Authority Executive Director Ronnie Hakim. “I’m so pleased that we now have the funds to advance it to construction.”

###