

\$24 Billion New Jersey Infrastructure Plan Benefits Citizens and Economy

New Toll Rates Vital to Improving and Maintaining 3 Major NJ Highways

EDISON, NEW JERSEY, US, June 26, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Gov. Phil Murphy's approval of toll hikes for three major New Jersey highways are good for road infrastructure and a boost to the state's economy, according to top construction experts.



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Railroad Construction Co.*

Murphy recently announced tolls would rise by 36% on the New Jersey Turnpike and 37% on the Garden State Parkway, according to news reports. "On the turnpike, drivers of passenger cars must pay \$13.85 to drive from Exit 1 to Exit 18W. The toll hikes put the new cost at \$18.85," according to northjersey.com.

The increases become effective Sept. 13.

The 10-year, \$24 billion construction project would include

widening a section of the turnpike and parkway, creating permanent cashless toll payments and replacing a bridge that connects New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

"I said from the get-go we weren't going to kick the can down the road anymore on infrastructure," Murphy said. "There's going to be a plan, and it's, I believe, the right plan."

"This new infrastructure construction plan is great for putting people back to work, but just as important, it's vital to maintaining safe, reliable roads," said Art Corwin, president, [Railroad Construction Co.](#), which has a long history of building infrastructure projects, including roadways, bridges, buildings, utility systems and rail facilities. "The toll increase will result in better roads, and there will be less damage to travelers' automobiles who use these major highways."

New Jersey drivers pay an average of \$601 in auto repairs every year because of poor road conditions, according to the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

Nationally, New Jersey roads have performed poorly when compared with other states. Several independent studies support the need for improvement on New Jersey's infrastructure.

The 2016 Infrastructure Report Card by the American Society of Civil Engineers gave New Jersey a D+ grade, judging the state on capacity condition, funding, future need, operation and maintenance, public safety, resilience and innovation.

This year, New Jersey finished 43 out of 50 states in Wallethub's ranking of the Best and Worst States to Drive In. Its criteria included the cost of ownership & maintenance, traffic and infrastructure, safety, and access to vehicle and maintenance.

The new construction plan will become a game changer in improving New Jersey's infrastructure.

"The upgrades will greatly improve conditions for commuters and take care of these major roadways reasonably before other roadway and bridge repairs and upgrades need to be made," said Jack Kocsis, Jr. CEO, [Associated Construction Contractors of New Jersey](#) (ACCNJ).

Kocsis says his organization and other "labor partners strongly supported the efforts to deliver a long-term capital program for both the NJ Turnpike Authority and the South Jersey Transportation Authority.

"When transportation funding is stable, state agencies can execute major infrastructure upgrades and keep a timely repair schedule of high-density roadways. This increases the longevity of our great state's transportation network."

Both Corwin and Kocsis maintain that the project is a boost for the New Jersey economy because they expect that thousands of skilled workers will be involved in the project, including laborers, operating engineers, iron workers, carpenters and dock builders.

The wild card that will affect the project is the issue of safety, given the ravages of the coronavirus pandemic. Workers on the infrastructure project will take all necessary steps to maintain safety precautions, Kocsis said.

"Even before COVID-19, our contractors were asked how they keep projects safe," Kocsis said. "We are proud to point to the quality and expertise of our members, who promote the industry's best practices. Most of all, we extol their focus on safety – the most robust safety efforts in the industry.

"We presented 45 safety awards this month, based on 2019 safety records. We were impressed again and again during the last three months by the extraordinary lengths our members put forth to protect workers from infection. It has been a new experience full of tough challenges, and they continue to make COVID-19 protection as much a part of the jobsite culture as all the other safety risks."

For more information about Railroad Construction Co., visit www.railroadconstruction.com.

For more information about ACCNJ, visit www.accnj.org.

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Tomislav S Peric

PericPR

+1 856-874-0049

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