

APPROVED
MIDDLESEX COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE

MINUTES – November 25, 2014

Attendance Officers

Mr. Paul Larrousse, Chairman

Municipal Representatives

Mr. Sanford Gardner, East Brunswick Township

Mr. Gary Panichello, Highland Park Borough

Mr. Thomas Valenti, New Brunswick City

Mr. Thomas Vigna, North Brunswick Township

Mr. Deven Patel, South Brunswick Township

Mr. Rizwan Baig, South Brunswick Township

Mr. Thomas Cornell, Woodbridge Township

Others

Mr. Richard Lowe, 12th Legislative District

Mr. Daniel A. Lebar, Esq, 18th Legislative Districts

Mr. Krehely, Anselmi & Cicco, Inc. (Contractor)

Ms. Carla Cefalo, County Business Development and Education

Ms. Denise Peck, Department of Transportation

Ms. Samir Shah, Department of Transportation (Project Mgmt.)

Mr. Niranjam Patel, Department of Transportation (Project Mgmt.)

Ms. Clare Larsom, Department of Transportation

Mr. Irfan Ahmad, Department of Transportation (Project Mgmt.)

Ms. Terry Anthoniewicz, Edison Resident

Mr. Vincent Dima, Edison Resident

Ms. Patricia M. Spearnock, Edison Resident

Mr. Steven Manera, HNTB, Consultant for NJDOT

Mr. Morteza Ansari, Keep Middlesex Moving

Mr. Steven Fittante, New Jersey Transit

Mr. Andrew Besold, North Brunswick Resident

Mr. Keith Hamas, North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Staff

Mr. George Ververides, Director, Office of Planning

Mr. Anthony Gambilonghi, Supervisor, Transportation Division

Mr. Bruce McCracken, Principal Planner, Transportation Division

Total in Attendance – 28

I.

Call to Order

- **Statement an Open Public Meetings Act**
- **Pledge Allegiance**

II.

Minutes

October 28, 2014 Minutes were distributed for approval at the next meeting.

Motion to approve the September 23, 2014 Minutes was made by Mr. Sanford Gardner, seconded by Mr. Thomas Cornell, motion carried unanimously.

III.

- A. **Welcome/ Chairman's Remarks** –Chairman Larrousse called the meeting to order in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. He welcomed all that were in attendance at the meeting and called for the Pledge of Allegiance.
- B. **Sign in Reminder** – Chairman Larrousse reminded the public to sign the attendance sheet.
- C. **Correspondence** – Mr. Gambilonghi stated that the Board of Chosen Freeholder and the TCC sent resolutions to the New Jersey Department of Transportation (DOT) requesting installation of safety fencing over the Route 35 Victory Bridge. The DOT has approved the request and will install a 5ft high mesh type safety fence on the Route 35 Bridge and on the Route 9 Bridge as well. The fences are estimated to cost \$1.4 million and construction is expected to be done by the end of the year.
- D. **Comments** – None

IV. **Introduction of TCC Members** –

Mr. Paul Larrousse introduced himself as Chairman of the Transportation Coordinating Committee. All persons and members in attendance of the meeting introduced themselves and what organization(s) they represented.

V. **Special Item:** Route 18 Bridge Over Route 1 in the City of New Brunswick
Presented by the New Jersey Department of Transportation

As part of the New Brunswick Route 18 Bridge over Route 1 project, Mr. Manera presented an overview of the scope of work, which featured construction staging, ramp closure and detours.

Mr. Krehely discussed in depth the nine construction staging elements for the project and other detours and closures. Construction stages 1 - 3 have already begun and will continue until the Spring, 2015; stages 4 – 6 primarily will be conducted on the weekend continuous

from Friday night to Monday morning; stages 6a – 6b will require four weekends; stages 7 - 9 will occur between the Fall 2015 and Spring 2016. The reconstruction of ramp 'D', will require one weekend of closure, a detour to Woodbridge Avenue interchange, landscaping and cleanup.

Mr. Manera discussed the structural elements, which includes widening Route 18 northbound over Route 1, the replacement of superstructures on the north and south bound of Route 1 and Ramp 'E' on northbound side, retaining walls, and sign structures. Roadway changes include widening the northbound shoulder from Westons Mill Pond to Ramp 'D', shoulder conversion into a third through lane, improving Ramp 'D' curve radii, bridge slabs, and partial milling and resurfacing. Work is to be done utilizing accelerated bridge construction techniques involving prefabricated units.

Other items discussed included stormwater management on Ramp 'A', the replacement of cameras at Tower Center Blvd., highway illumination, and utility relocations. Construction staging, roadway detours, communication and coordination matters were also addressed.

The presentation was requested in response to questions that were raised on the scope and schedule of this project by members of the TCC and meeting was arranged through the NJDOT Office of Community and Constituent Relations. A graphical illustration of the project area showing ramp designation is included in appendix.

Staff Reports

A. New Jersey Department of Transportation – Denise Peck
No Report.

B. New Jersey Transit –Steven Fittante
Mr. Fittante commented on the diesel locomotives being used on the North Jersey Coast Line and Raritan Valley Line. Mr. Fittante announced that the one seat ride on the Raritan Valley line now provides direct service into New York Penn Station.

Mr. Gambilonghi stated the Project Prioritization Committee at NJTPA approved \$910,000 of federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality funding to be used by NJ Transit to support weekday evening operation of expanded one seat ride rail services to New York on the Raritan Valley Line. The funding will also be used to support operations of new peak hour rail services that would extend the one seat ride New York service from its present terminus at Long Branch to the southernmost end of the line at Bay Head. Middlesex County municipalities with stations on the North Jersey Coast Line include South Amboy, Perth Amboy, Woodbridge and Avenel.

C. North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) – Keith Hamas
No Report.

D. New Jersey Turnpike Authority – Richard Brundage (Retired)

Absent.

E. Rutgers – The State University – Jennifer Stuart

Absent.

F. KMM – Keep Middlesex Moving - Morteza Ansari –

Mr. Ansari discussed bike pedestrian matters and the bike share program in partnership with Rutgers University.

G. Middlesex County Department of Community Services – Laila Caune

Absent.

H. Middlesex County Engineering Office / Traffic Safety – Richard Wallner

Absent.

I. Middlesex County Transportation, Board of Social Services – Nancy Nicola

Absent.

J. TCC Bikeways – Pedestrian Task Force – Guy Gaspari

Absent.

K. Middlesex County Improvement Authority – Brian Wahler

Absent.

L. East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA) – Mike and Ann Kruimer

Absent.

M. TCC Transit Subcommittee – Paul Larrousse, Chairman

No Report.

N. Academy Bus Co – Chuck Kassinger

Absent.

O. Suburban Transit / Coach USA – Ron Kohn

Absent.

P. CR 529 Corridor Study Update – Tony Gambilonghi

Mr. Gambilonghi stated that the first meeting of the Steering Committee was held on November 13th to discuss the overall project approach, study area limits, and municipal jurisdictions, project timeline, meeting scheduled and milestones, and data collection activities and accomplishments to date.

The first meeting allowed for the input and feedback from the Committee on obtaining existing local planning documents and data sources, other key stakeholder groups that may bring value to the project, and future open house meetings to be held in study area

sites. The purpose of the study is to improve transit, bicycling and pedestrian connections within the study area. The meeting emphasis was on the importance of engaging local input as a means of accomplishing the intended goal.

Q. Business Development and Education – Carla Cefalo

No Report.

R. Transportation News Update – Bruce McCracken

Mr. McCracken highlighted the following news articles that were distributed in the packet for information:

PA reform bills get Assembly panel's OK	Pg. 2
Public Safety: Fatalities on state's roads decline for second year	Pg. 6
Price tag for Hudson River tunnels put a \$16B	Pg. 9
Letter – Feedback: Finally, it's time to address NJ's transportation crisis	Pg. 12
Why waits at PA bus terminal are shorter	Pg. 16
Op. Raise the gas tax	Pg. 18
Red-light cameras to shut down next month	Pg. 19

Article Appendix attached

S. Staff Activities – George Ververides –

Mr. Ververides highlighted infrastructure funding concerns and stated the need for less talk and more action to handle the matters facing Middlesex County and New Jersey state infrastructure.

VI.

A. TCC Member Comments- None

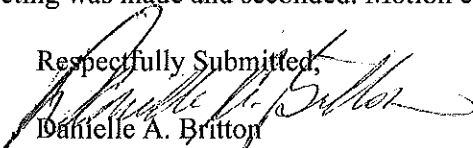
- B. Public Comments** – After the meeting, additional discussion took place on the detour plan and signage with Ms. Denise Peck from NJDOT; the consultants and Edison residents, Mr. Vincent Dina and Ms. Terry Anthoniewicz; and Edison Township resident Ms. Patricia M. Spearnock. Several requests were made and expressed and acknowledgements were made to address those requests.

VIII.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,


Danielle A. Britton

Middlesex County Transportation Coordinating Committee

Article

Appendix

The Star-Ledger

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2012

ARELLANO/WIREIMAGE

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NEWS

TRENTON

P.A. reform bills get Assembly panel's OK

By Steve Strunsky
NJ Advance Media for The Star-Ledger

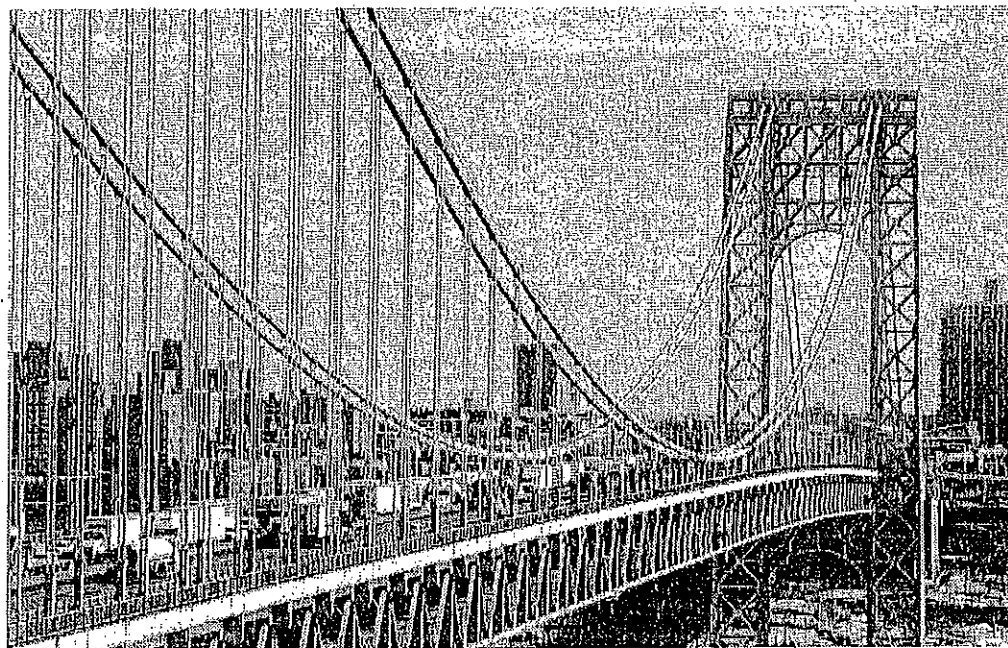
A state Assembly panel approved a pair of bipartisan measures that would subject the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to more expansive open public records laws, protect whistle blowers, and require that lawmakers receive annual reports from the bistate agency.

"As the Legislature continues to investigate last year's unexplained George Washington Bridge lane closures, it's critical that we address the root of the problem — that this overwhelmingly flawed agency has no sense of accountability whatsoever," Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttie (D-Bergen), the bills' principal sponsor, said in a statement.

Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto, a co-sponsor, praised the bill in ambitious terms: "The unfortunate truth is that this agency clearly is a breeding ground for wrongdoing. That ends with these bills."

The measure's Republican co-sponsors — Amy Handlin, Alison Littel McHose and Holly Schepisi — also applauded the Assembly State and Local Government Committee's passage of the two bills, which have already been approved by the state Senate. They could be scheduled by Prieto for a full vote of the Assembly as soon as Nov. 13.

One of today's bills (A3350) would subject the Port Authority to New York and



A view of the George Washington Bridge. (JOHN O'BOYLE/NJ ADVANCE MEDIA FOR THE STAR-LEDGER)

New Jersey's state freedom of information laws, requiring the agency to turn over any documents deemed public by either of the two states. People who say their document request was wrongly denied would be able to sue the agency under either state law.

The other bill (A3417) has provisions including mandatory annual reports by the agency to both states' legislatures, and whistle blower protections for employees who report what they believe to be impropriety.

The bills were introduced in response to the scandal touched off by lane closings at the George Washington

Bridge in September 2013, which exposed division within the troubled agency.

The bills must be approved by both states' legislatures and signed by both governors.

The hearing was just days after Thursday's introduction of a reform package by Assemblyman John Wisniewski (D-Middlesex), one of the Legislature's most outspoken advocates of Port Authority reform.

Wisniewski's legislation would reduce the governors' number of appointees to the agency's 12-member board from six each to three, apportioning the rest to lawmakers and a citizens advisory committee, and

would strip the governors of their veto power over board actions.

State Sen. Robert Gordon (D-Bergen), who sponsored the Senate versions of the bills, said the two governors would never sign Wisniewski's legislation, essentially ceding key powers over the Port Authority. On Friday, Gordon labelled Wisniewski's bill "dead on arrival."

Wisniewski, who says many of the Port Authority's problems result from too much interference by the governors, said he was "disappointed" that Gordon preferred the "status quo."

Steve Strunsky may be reached at sstrunsky@njadvancemedia.com.

Fatalities on state's roads decline for second year

The number of people dying on the state's highways and local roads continued to decline in 2013, with 48 fewer people losing their lives in crashes than in 2012, according to a State Police analysis for the year. Declines also were reported in the number of motorcycle fatalities, from 81 in 2012 to 57 last year. Pedestrian deaths dropped from 163 to 132 in 2013. The number of fatal bicycle accidents remained the same as in 2012, with 14 killed. Driver inattention was the top factor in 164 of the crashes last year, followed by alcohol use in 121 of the accidents, State Police said. Speed was a factor in 82 crashes last year, a decline from 2012.

NEW JERSEY TODAY

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542 The overall number of people killed in 508 crashes in 2013, a drop from the 2012 death toll of 590, according to the State Police. It was the second year the number of traffic deaths dropped after a spike to 627 in 2011.

— Larry Higgs/NJ Advance Media

The Star-Ledger

NAL EDITION

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2014

AFFILIATED WITH

ni

AMTRAK PROJECT

Price tag for Hudson River tunnels put at \$16 billion

By Larry Higgs

NJ Advance Media for The Star-Ledger

The president of Amtrak said Thursday construction of new Amtrak tunnels linking New Jersey and New York could cost about \$16 billion and take up to a decade to complete.

"It could be done in seven years if we put some incentives on it," the president, Joseph Boardman, said during an interview with The Star-Ledger's editorial board.

"We're looking at a minimum of seven years to 11 years. That's from the time we get a go-ahead."

Amtrak officials are in a race against time to avoid a commuting nightmare if one of the current 100-year-old tunnels has to be closed for major repairs before new tunnels are built. Train traffic into the nation's largest city would slow to a trickle — from an average of 24 trains an hour to six — if one of the tunnels had to be closed.

The regional economy could lose \$100 million a day in economic activity in the event of a shutdown, Boardman said.

About 400 NJ Transit commuter trains a day travel through the tunnels, he said.

An estimated 50 percent to 80 percent of funds for the Gateway tunnel project are likely to come from the federal government, with the remainder of the cost to be shared by New Jersey, New York and Amtrak, he said.

Gov. Chris Christie canceled the Access to the Region's Core tunnel project in October 2010 over concerns the state would have to pay for cost overruns that could have raised the price for the project to \$14 billion.

Boardman said any cost overruns for the Gateway tunnel project would be shared.

A more precise price tag to build the tunnels, a new Portal Bridge and an annex south of New York Penn Station won't be known until after the preliminary engineering is completed.

Boardman said the next step is for Amtrak to take proposals for an environmental review in the spring.

Last month, Amtrak said the tunnels were damaged by floodwaters driven by Hurricane Sandy.

Larry Higgs may be reached at lhiggs@njadvancemedia.com

The Star-Ledger

FINAL EDITION

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2014

APRIL 11, 2014

Feedback

Finally, it's time to address N.J.'s transportation crisis

New Jersey's Transportation Trust Fund, which helps repair deteriorated roads, bridges and public transportation infrastructure, will run out of funding in approximately eight months. When that happens, there will literally be no financial means available to fix infrastructure problems.

From first-hand experience, I can tell you that New Jersey's infrastructure is old and deteriorating rapidly from heavy use and severe weather. We have thousands of bridges that are deemed structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. In some cases, bridges have been closed because they were no longer safe to drive across.

If we don't act soon, bridge closings could become the norm in New Jersey. The resulting dreadful traffic conditions will make it more difficult to get our children to school safely and for police and emergency vehicles to respond quickly.

The ForwardNJ coalition, of which I am proud to be a part, has put forward a number of possible solutions to the trust fund problem. We hope these ideas will be taken under serious consideration. We are encouraged by the discussions of potential solutions that are ongoing across the State.

There is no one right solution. However, it is clear that having no solution is no longer acceptable.

Jack Lettiere

Former state transportation commissioner and NJ Transit chairman, principal, Jack Lettiere Consulting

The Star-Ledger

PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2014

cutting commuter

Why waits at P.A. bus terminal are shorter. PAGE 13



Rush-hour commuters wait in line at the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Manhattan. (2005 STAR-LEDGER FILE PHOTO)

By Larry Higgs

NJ Advance Media for The Star-Ledger

No one will ever mistake the gritty Port Authority Bus Terminal for Disney World, though the commuter hub and amusement park have one thing in common: long lines of customers waiting for a ride.

But things may be getting a little better for commuters in what some describe as the unhappiest place on earth.

Officials from NJ Transit and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey have attacked the problem over the last six to seven weeks by doing what might seem unthinkable — giving 1,600 commuter buses less rather than more time to get across the Hudson River in the afternoon.

On a tour Monday afternoon, the officials showed how this bus ballet is working to move vehicles in and out of the terminal and get commuters out of lines and into their seats.

"The early signs are good. ... We're hopeful, but we have to be on top of it," said Dennis Martin, general manager of transit bus operations. "We're processing more buses than we used to. We're seeing no queueing on the second floor."

The changes are eliminating long lines

of riders snaking around the terminal's second-floor corridors and reducing the chaotic mob of commuters standing on the third and fourth floors, which generated complaints on social media this summer.

The new mantra seems to be the same as a cattle drive — keep 'em rolling.

"Buses arrive, people get on board, and they're leaving," Martin said.

Some commuters interviewed Monday said they had noticed a difference.

"It was extremely bad at the beginning of this year," said Michael Cassidy of Weehawkin, who has been riding the bus for 10 years. "There would be no buses and I'd wait a half-hour. Now maybe, once or twice a week I have to wait that long. Before, it was every day."

Oded Weiss of Livingston was standing in line on the third floor when suddenly an official led the waiting commuters downstairs to another gate where his bus was arriving.

"I've been here 25 years; it's more or less the same," Weiss said. "I know when the bus comes and I'm here five minutes before."

His complaint is that a bus scheduled to pick him up at 8 a.m. doesn't always show up.

For his part, Ari Clark of Bergenfield

said the buses have been "moving pretty consistently."

Clark's issue was with the line for the ticket-vending machine.

"They need more (machines) and they could be faster," he said. "They need to create a fillable MetroCard or phone apps, so we don't have to use paper tickets."

Think of the terminal as a merry-go-round, where ideally, buses come in, load up and get out.

Before the change, officials said it took up to 90 minutes to get a bus from parking lots and garages in New Jersey in the afternoon to the bus terminal.

Except that it's not a simple straight shot from the Lincoln Tunnel to the bus terminal.

Buses backing up on terminal ramps were like an overflowing bucket. They caused tunnel back-ups, which prompted officials to divert buses to drive around 10th and 11th avenues in Manhattan until space opened up at the bus terminal.

"If buses arrived earlier, they'd get diverted earlier and it takes long for them to loop (back to the terminal)," said Mark Schaaf, assistant bus terminal and Lincoln Tunnel general manager, who

SEE LINES, PAGE 16

Lines

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

showed an aerial photo from May of streets clogged with buses. "On-time performance deteriorates and passengers cue up."

Martin suggested "dramatically holding back buses," giving them 45 minutes to get to the terminal. Buses arriving at the terminal too early would get "kicked out" so they wouldn't back up the flow of buses to gates.

The new plan has saved 15 minutes at the bus terminal and reduced commuter crowding at bus gates, said Cedrick Fulton, the Port Authority's director of bridges, tunnels and terminals.

"This is akin to air traffic control," Fulton said. "About 2,000 buses arrive here between 3 and 7 p.m., which have to be managed. There is no margin for error, we have to get it right."

wait time

To keep buses moving, NJ Transit reassigned 12 workers in bus parking lots and in the terminal and authorized overtime. Some Port Authority staff were reassigned, and authority police also are involved in keeping the traffic movement plan. All commuter bus carriers are also participating.

Some of those workers decide which buses stay out

of the terminal or come in, which can mean 150-200 buses are booted out on the street, to keep bus traffic circulating in the terminal, said Dianne Ehter, terminals, bridges and tunnels deputy director. But the buses can loop back in the terminal in 10 minutes instead of the 45 minutes it used to take to return, she said.

Sometimes early, empty buses are even sent back to New Jersey to keep the terminal moving.

"We're no longer allowing buses to sit at the gate and wait," Schaaf said. "What we're doing works. On Monday, buses were climbing the ramp and moving through the terminal."

"Before, they'd come to a grinding halt," Schaaf said as buses lumbered past him. "Here, you see movement."

Agency officials aren't saying that all of the delays have been eliminated. All it takes is one bus breakdown to leave 50 people waiting in line.

"In the summertime, the room was filled with people," said Michael Kilcoyne, NJ Transit's deputy general manager of bus operations. "With the early loading process, we eliminated people standing (in the terminal)."

Larry Higgs may be reached at lhiggs@njadvancemedia.com. Follow him on Twitter @commutinglarry.

The Star-Ledger

EDITION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2014

OPINION

PAGE 14 / THE STAR-LEDGER / WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2014

Lengthening long commutes

In comments to the EPA on its dredging plan for the lower eight miles of the Passaic River, NJ Transit stated the work could cause two-hour delays, every day for trains using the Northeast Corridor Line, the busiest train section in the United States. I don't understand how the EPA could consider a plan that might cause two hours of delay for train commuters every day.

I applaud efforts to remove contaminated sediment from the Lower Passaic River. This work is absolutely necessary. But environmental work cannot sacrifice the work of New Jersey commuters.

Many of us get on a train at 6 a.m. and get home by 8 p.m. It's a long day and a necessity to support our families. Adding another two hours, every day, is not a viable plan.

Brian Sprinitis
Flemington

Feedback

Raise the gas tax

Regarding the Nov. 7 article, "Gas tax increase to fix state roads is unavoidable," I absolutely agree that we must fix our roads, and to do that, we need to pay for it.

I have spent \$975 this year replacing a broken windshield (rock thrown up from car ahead of me) and a tire blowout (pothole), and I feel I ought to be watching the traffic around me instead of the roadbed.

We need to be realistic about fixing our roads, and if it costs me \$300 more per year in gasoline taxes, it will be less than what I have spent this year and will provide me with an increased feeling of safety while driving.

Joseph Treimel
Pequannock

The Star-Ledger

FINAL EDITION

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2014

NEW JERSEY

Red-light cameras to shut down next month

By Larry Higgs

NJ Advance Media for The Star-Ledger

Whether you love 'em or hate 'em, the state Department of Transportation is telling towns that red-light cameras have to officially go dark on Dec. 16.

A three-paragraph letter from the department reminds municipal officials that the legal authority to run red-light cameras and issue tickets ends on that date. The letter also asks participating municipalities to quickly send their final crash data reports to the agency.

That data, collected over five years from 73 camera-equipped intersections in 24 towns, will be used by the Transportation Department to recommend whether to stop, continue or expand the red-light camera program. Legislation would have to be introduced to continue or expand the program.

The camera program has been controversial from its start, with supporters citing statistics that the cameras have improved driver behavior and reduced accidents.

Opponents said the deck had been stacked against drivers by shortening yellow light times and challenged the information used in claims of safety gains.

State Assemblyman Declan O'Scanlon (R-Monmouth) characterized the agency's letter as a "Ding-dong, the witch is dead" moment for drivers.

"This letter is great news," O'Scanlon said. "We knew the program was set to expire on the 16th, but this communication from the DOT makes it official."

Finally the robbing of New Jersey's motorists will end."

Last month, a contingent of 30 local officials lobbied lawmakers to continue the

camera program, citing safety reasons.

But lawmakers seemed skeptical that Gov. Chris Christie would sign legislation to extend the program.

In August, the state judiciary asked local courts in 17 towns to throw out

17,000 alleged infractions in camera-controlled intersections because drivers weren't sent violations notices within a 90-day window.

Larry Higgs may be reached at lhiggs@njadvancemedia.com. Follow him on Twitter @commutinglarry.