

**ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS  
COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT TO  
ASSEMBLY, No. 2919**

with committee amendments

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: JUNE 9, 1997

The Assembly Transportation and Communications Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2919 with committee amendments.

This amended bill requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to authorize the removal of any unused railroad bridge in a right-of-way purchased with funds from the "New Jersey Bridge Rehabilitation and Improvement and Railroad Right-of-way Preservation Bond Act of 1989," P.L.1989, c.180, which funds were appropriated by P.L.1992, c.35, when, in the determination of the governing body of the municipality in which the bridge is located, the existence of such bridge impedes the flow of traffic on the roadway beneath the bridge, thus presenting a public safety hazard, and when such bridge is located within a right-of-way in which the integrity of the railroad line was broken prior to the purchase of the right-of-way by the department.

The bill also requires the DOT to authorize a municipality in which such bridge to undertake the removal of such bridge, provided that the removal occurs in accordance with a plan reviewed and approved by DOT. The bill provides DOT with 30 days to approve the municipality's plan for removal of the bridge or issue an alternative plan for removal by the municipality. If DOT does not act within 30 days of receipt of the municipality's request, the municipality's plan for removal will be deemed approved.

Specifically, this bill would provide for the demolition of the unused railroad bridge over Morris Avenue between Glenside Avenue and Ashwood Avenue in Summit, Union County, which is part of the abandoned Rahway Valley Line from Summit to Cranford. Another railroad bridge on this line, located over Broad Street in Summit, was removed prior to DOT's purchase of the right-of-way.

The existing bridge over Morris Avenue presents a danger to public health and safety because it impedes the passage of emergency vehicles, thus causing unnecessary, and potentially dangerous delay.

This bill also provides that in the event a railroad line using the

right-of-way is reactivated, a railroad bridge can be constructed at the same location in which the one was removed, provided that the reconstruction occurs at an elevation which does not impede the safe flow of traffic underneath the bridge. This bill only authorizes the removal of a railroad bridge; it does not transfer ownership of the right-of-way.

The committee amended the bill to provide that if a municipality seeks the removal of an unused railroad bridge, the municipality, not the DOT, will undertake the removal.