

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 84

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED MAY 2, 1996

By Assemblymen MORAN and CONNORS

- 1 AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION urging the New Jersey Highway Authority to
2 prioritize the construction of local lanes on the Garden State Parkway in
3 Ocean County.
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- 5 WHEREAS, In 1950, Ocean County's year-round population stood at
6 approximately 56,000 residents, and in the year 2000, it is expected that
7 Ocean County's 33 municipalities will be home to about 500,000 citizens;
8 and
- 9 WHEREAS, The more than 433,000 current citizens of Ocean County are
10 captive motorists to the Garden State Parkway (hereinafter GSP) because
11 of unprecedented growth, and stringent environmental regulations in place
12 in the Pinelands and CAFRA areas make any new major highway
13 construction unlikely at best; and
- 14 WHEREAS, State Highway Route No. 9, which was built in the 1920's, now
15 has nightmare traffic gridlock and bottlenecks at intersections because
16 volume greatly exceeds design capabilities; and
- 17 WHEREAS, The State of New Jersey has failed miserably over the last 50
18 years to provide necessary highway funds for upgrading the Route 9
19 corridor; and
- 20 WHEREAS, Upgrading Route 9 today would be a monumental task involving
21 a quagmire of environmental regulations and perhaps billions of precious
22 transportation funding dollars to acquire property and right-of-ways; and
- 23 WHEREAS, Any proposal to modernize or dualize the Route 9 corridor would
24 also profoundly and irrevocably impact "Main Street" in at least 12
25 communities and countless businesses and commercial sites; and
- 26 WHEREAS, When the ground was first broken for the GSP in the early 1950's,
27 it was impossible to envision the growth and profound changes that have
28 occurred in Ocean County and the entire South Jersey region over this half
29 century; and
- 30 WHEREAS, Today, a half century later, the GSP carries millions of vehicles to
31 the New Jersey Shore, to Atlantic City casino's, and to workplaces in
32 Northern New Jersey and New York; and
- 33 WHEREAS, It is evident that the GSP has evolved into a vital transportation
34 artery for the tourism industry and for the corporate and business centers
35 of the Northern New Jersey/New York metropolitan area, and is the

1 destination of tens of thousands of workers commuting daily from Ocean
2 County's bedroom communities; and

3 **WHEREAS**, The GSP at the dawn of the 21st Century is not a highway of
4 convenience for the people of Southern Ocean County, but a necessity
5 where motorists have no other viable highway alternative; and

6 **WHEREAS**, Long overdue improvements to the GSP are also vital for
7 emergency situations and evacuations during coastal storms, floods, and
8 forest fires in the Pinelands; and

9 **WHEREAS**, The upgrading of the GSP will dramatically reduce the chronic
10 traffic problem along Route 9 and alleviate the terrible loss of human life
11 and injuries; and

12 **WHEREAS**, Research conducted by the Office of Legislative Services has
13 determined that of the 90 existing interchanges along the GSP, 71 are toll
14 free; and

15 **WHEREAS**, Not only are about 80% of the GSP interchanges toll free, but
16 motorists in many counties, such as in Middlesex County, pay fewer tolls;
17 and

18 **WHEREAS**, An estimated 45% of GSP motorists enter and exit to their
19 workplace along a 13-mile section financed by federal funds, whereby tolls
20 are prohibited; and

21 **WHEREAS**, While motorists in the Northern New Jersey/New York
22 metropolitan area may pay tolls when commuting to work via the GSP, it
23 is reasonable to assume that they will drive shorter distances and might be
24 subject to a limited number of toll barriers; and

25 **WHEREAS**, Conversely, thousands of Ocean County citizens pass through
26 numerous toll barriers to commute to their workplace in Northern New
27 Jersey/New York metropolitan area each day and pay their fair share and
28 more in GSP tolls; and

29 **WHEREAS**, The citizens and taxpayers of Ocean County are demanding the
30 elimination of tolls and are vigorously opposed to the installation of new
31 tolls or toll barriers along the GSP; and

32 **WHEREAS**, Additional tolls or increased tolls could drive hundreds of
33 hardworking commuters back onto Route 9 to avoid increased costs which
34 would exacerbate the chronic traffic congestion on Route 9; and

35 **WHEREAS**, Increased or new tolls would be bad public policy and ultimately
36 prove to be counterproductive to building a better future for our
37 communities; and

38 **WHEREAS**, The citizens of Ocean County respectfully, urge the State of New
39 Jersey to launch priority planning to forge a viable solution to meet the
40 highway transportation infrastructure needs of Ocean County as we move
41 into the 21st Century; and

42 **WHEREAS**, The residents of Ocean County believe strongly that the New
43 Jersey Highway Authority and the Department of Transportation have a

1 compelling responsibility to fund the GSP modernization for enhanced
2 interchanges and local lanes; now, therefore,

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4 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

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6 1. The members of this House strongly urge the New Jersey Highway
7 Authority, in conjunction with the Department of Transportation, to launch
8 priority planning to develop a blueprint for bringing Ocean County's
9 transportation system into the 21st Century.

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11 2. The members of this House call upon the Governor, the Commissioner
12 of Transportation, and the members of the New Jersey Highway Authority, in
13 full partnership and cooperation with the Ocean County Board of Chosen
14 Freeholders and the 33 communities of Ocean County, to launch negotiations
15 and intensive planning strategies to prioritize the construction of local lanes on
16 the Garden State Parkway (hereinafter GSP) traversing the entire length of
17 Ocean County, connecting with existing local traffic lanes in Monmouth
18 County, and extending southward into Atlantic County or beyond, pursuant
19 to the needs of that county based upon decisions of its officials.

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21 3. The members of this House also call upon these officials to incorporate
22 into this modernization plan the design and construction of all partial
23 interchanges along the GSP throughout Ocean County, including, but not
24 limited to, interchanges at South Toms River, Lacey Township, Waretown
25 (Ocean Township), Barnegat Township, Manahawkin (Stafford Township),
26 and the proposed Berkeley Township link, as well as others in northern Ocean
27 County as determined by local officials.

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29 4. Authenticated copies of this resolution, signed by the Speaker of the
30 General Assembly and attested thereto by the Clerk thereof, shall be
31 forwarded to the Governor, the Commissioner of Transportation, and the
32 members of the New Jersey Highway Authority.

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STATEMENT

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37 This resolution strongly urges the New Jersey Highway Authority, in
38 conjunction with the Department of Transportation, to launch priority planning
39 to develop a blueprint to bring Ocean County's transportation system into the
40 21st Century and therefore calls upon the Governor, the Department of
41 Transportation and the New Jersey Highway Authority, in full partnership and
42 cooperation with the Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the 33
43 communities of Ocean County, to launch negotiations and intensive planning

1 strategies to prioritize the construction of local lanes on the Garden State
2 Parkway (hereinafter GSP) traversing the entire length of Ocean County,
3 connecting with existing local traffic lanes in Monmouth County, and extending
4 southward into Atlantic County or beyond, pursuant to the needs of that
5 county based upon decisions of its officials.

6 The resolution also calls upon these officials to incorporate into this
7 modernization plan the design and construction of all partial interchanges along
8 the GSP throughout Ocean County, including, but not limited to, interchanges
9 at South Toms River, Lacey Township, Waretown (Ocean Township),
10 Barnegat Township, Manahawkin (Stafford Township), and the proposed
11 Berkeley Township link, as well as others in northern Ocean County as
12 determined by local officials.

13 The GSP, because of environmental and economic factors must, by
14 necessity, be made to assume an even larger transportation role for the 21st
15 Century throughout Ocean County. Although envisioned 50 years ago as a
16 way to open up South Jersey for tourism, the GSP is today the only viable
17 north/south highway with the infrastructure and capabilities for expansion to
18 fulfill the transportation needs of the fastest growing region of New Jersey as
19 we move into the 21st Century.

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24 Urges New Jersey Highway Authority to prioritize construction of local lanes
25 on Garden State Parkway in Ocean County.