

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 117

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 9, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)

SYNOPSIS

Urges Biden Administration to prioritize funding for Gateway Program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A SENATE RESOLUTION** urging the Biden Administration to
2 prioritize funding for the Gateway Program.

3

4 **WHEREAS**, The Northeast Corridor (NEC) is the most heavily used
5 passenger rail line in the United States; and

6 **WHEREAS**, More than 2,000 intercity and commuter trains, supporting
7 approximately 800,000 passenger trips, use the corridor to make
8 daily trips across eight states and Washington D.C.; and

9 **WHEREAS**, The existing North River Tunnels, which carry the NEC
10 under the Hudson River, are over 100 years old, were severely
11 damaged in 2012 by Superstorm Sandy, and are in a serious state of
12 disrepair; and

13 **WHEREAS**, The Gateway Program (program) was unveiled on
14 February 7, 2011 as a planned phased expansion and renovation of
15 the NEC rail line between Newark, New Jersey and New York City,
16 New York; and

17 **WHEREAS**, The program would build new rail bridges in the New
18 Jersey Meadowlands, new tunnels under Bergen Hill (Hudson
19 Palisades) and the Hudson River, and finance the construction of a
20 new terminal annex; and

21 **WHEREAS**, Since the program's inception, costs and funding for the
22 project have caused delays and there has been little movement on
23 the overall program, which, cannot move forward without federal
24 support, due to ownership by the National Railroad Passenger
25 Corporation (Amtrak), federal permitting requirements, and the
26 regional nature of the project; and

27 **WHEREAS**, Every year the program is delayed, the cost of labor and
28 materials rises; and

29 **WHEREAS**, If the tunnels continue to deteriorate to the point where
30 they must shut down, the United States economy would suffer a
31 \$16 billion loss over four years, as noted in a February 2019 report
32 by the Regional Plan Association (RPA); and

33 **WHEREAS**, Additionally, the RPA report noted that a shutdown of the
34 tunnels would cause New Jersey home values to depreciate by \$22
35 billion; and

36 **WHEREAS**, Finally, if the tunnels were closed, service between New
37 Jersey and New York and between Washington, D.C. and Boston
38 would be halted and the roadways would be gridlocked with
39 thousands of additional motorists; and

40 **WHEREAS**, Having traveled frequently on the NEC and having once
41 noted that the Hudson tunnels are "... the lifeline for the northeast,"
42 President Biden and his administration are called upon to prioritize
43 the funding of this integral program; now, therefore,

44

45 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:*

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47 1. This House urges the Biden Administration to prioritize
48 funding for the Gateway Program.

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2 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
3 shall be transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the President
4 of the United States, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the
5 United State Senate, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the United
6 States House of Representatives, and every member of Congress
7 from this State.

9
10 STATEMENT

12 This resolution urges the Biden Administration to prioritize
13 funding for the Gateway Program.

The Northeast Corridor (NEC) is the most heavily used passenger rail line in the United States, with more than 2,000 intercity and commuter trains, making approximately 800,000 passenger daily trips across eight states and Washington D.C. The existing North River Tunnels, which carry the NEC under the Hudson River, are over 100 years old, were severely damaged in 2012 by Superstorm Sandy, and are in a serious state of disrepair.

21 The Gateway Program (program) was unveiled on February 7,
22 2011 as a planned phased expansion and renovation of the NEC rail
23 line between Newark, New Jersey and New York City, New York.
24 The program would build new rail bridges in the New Jersey
25 Meadowlands, new tunnels under Bergen Hill (Hudson Palisades)
26 and the Hudson River, and finance the construction of a new
27 terminal annex.

However, since the program's inception, costs and funding for the project have caused delays and there has been little movement on the overall program, which, cannot move forward without federal support, due to Amtrak ownership, federal permitting requirements, and the regional nature of the project. Every year the program is delayed, the cost of labor and materials rises. If the tunnels continue to deteriorate to the point where they must shut down, the United States economy would suffer a \$16 billion loss over four years, as noted in a February 2019 report by the Regional Plan Association (RPA). Additionally, the RPA report noted that a shutdown of the tunnels would cause New Jersey home values to depreciate by \$22 billion. Finally, if the tunnels were closed, service between New Jersey and New York and between Washington, D.C. and Boston would be halted and the roadways would be gridlocked with thousands of additional motorists.

43 Having traveled frequently on the NEC and having once noted
44 that the Hudson tunnels are “... the lifeline for the northeast,”
45 President Biden and his administration are called upon to prioritize
46 the funding of this integral program.