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# *Committee Meeting*

of

## SENATE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

*“The Committee will hear testimony on proposed Port Authority of New York and New Jersey reform legislation, and on priorities for inclusion in the Port Authority’s revision of its 10-year capital plan”*

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**LOCATION:** Bergen County Public Freeholders  
Meeting Room  
Hackensack, New Jersey

**DATE:** October 20, 2015  
2:00 p.m./6:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:**

Senator Robert M. Gordon, Chair  
Senator Loretta Weinberg, Vice Chair  
Senator Paul A. Sarlo  
Senator Thomas H. Kean Jr.



**ALSO PRESENT:**

Philip M. Mersinger  
Michael R. Molimock  
*Office of Legislative Services*  
*Committee Aides*

Mark Magyar  
*Senate Majority*  
*Committee Aide*

Frank Dominguez  
*Senate Republican*  
*Committee Aide*

***Meeting Recorded and Transcribed by***  
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,  
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey

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ROBERT M. GORDON  
*Chairman*

LORETTA WEINBERG  
*Vice-Chair*

M. TERESA RUIZ  
PAUL A. SARLO  
THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.  
JOSEPH M. KYRILLOS, JR.

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## New Jersey State Legislature

SENATE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE  
STATE HOUSE ANNEX  
PO BOX 068  
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### COMMITTEE NOTICE

TO: MEMBERS OF THE SENATE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE  
FROM: SENATOR ROBERT M. GORDON, CHAIRMAN  
SUBJECT: COMMITTEE MEETING - OCTOBER 20, 2015

*The public may address comments and questions to Michael R. Molimock, Committee Aide, or make bill status and scheduling inquiries to Shirley Link, Secretary, at (609)847-3855, fax (609)292-0561, or e-mail: OLSAideSLO@njleg.org. Written and electronic comments, questions and testimony submitted to the committee by the public, as well as recordings and transcripts, if any, of oral testimony, are government records and will be available to the public upon request.*

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**The Senate Legislative Oversight Committee will meet on Tuesday, October 20, 2015 in the Bergen County Freeholders Public Meeting Room, One Bergen County Plaza, 5th Floor, Hackensack, New Jersey. The afternoon session will begin at 2:00 PM and the evening session will begin at 6:30 PM to give commuters an opportunity to testify.**

**The committee will hear testimony on proposed Port Authority of New York and New Jersey reform legislation and on priorities for inclusion in the Port Authority's revision of its 10-year capital plan.**

Issued 10/7/15

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**SENATOR ROBERT M. GORDON (Chair):** Good afternoon, everyone.

This meeting of the Senate Committee on Legislative Oversight will come to order.

Would you all please rise and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance? (all recite pledge)

May I have a roll call, please?

**MR. MOLIMOCK (Committee Aide):** Senator Kean.

**SENATOR KEAN:** Here.

**MR. MOLIMOCK:** Senator Sarlo.

**SENATOR SARLO:** Here.

**MR. MOLIMOCK:** Senator Weinberg.

**SENATOR LORETTA WEINBERG (Vice Chair):** Here.

**MR. MOLIMOCK:** Chairman Gordon.

**SENATOR GORDON:** Here.

Let me welcome you all here this afternoon. I would like to make some introductory comments at the outset.

I'd like to welcome you all to the third in a series of Senate Legislative Oversight Committee hearings on Port Authority reform legislation, and on the priorities for the Port Authority's revised 10-year capital plan.

We are holding this hearing in Hackensack to hear from local officials, and especially from commuters, on how they believe the Port Authority can be improved, and on what they believe the priorities should be for the Port Authority's capital plan. Today's hearing will be in two parts: This afternoon we will hear from elected officials and any private

citizens who wish to speak; we will then reconvene at 6:30 this evening, at which point we hope to hear from mostly commuters.

A fourth hearing will be scheduled for next month in Hudson County at a location convenient for PATH system riders.

We have made progress in recent weeks, I believe. Last month, in a significant breakthrough, Governors Christie and Cuomo sent a letter to the Obama Administration offering to have the states and the Port Authority put up 50 percent of the estimated \$20 billion cost of the Gateway rail tunnel project if the Federal government would come up with the other half. Meanwhile, we are hoping that the Port Authority Board will vote as early as this week to authorize construction of a new Port Authority Bus Terminal one block west of the current structure.

The Board started out with 20 proposals for a new Bus Terminal, and now its option list is down to five. The plans vary greatly in cost, completion timetable, the building site itself, relative convenience for commuters and, most important, whether they will meet the projected demand for a 50 percent increase in ridership by 2040.

Three of the four members of the Port Authority Bus Terminal subcommittee -- including Chairman John Degnan, former Bergen County Executive Pat Schuber, and Commissioner Ken Lipper of New York -- are recommending what has come to be known as *Option 3*. That proposal, which also has the support of New Jersey Transit, calls for the construction of the new Bus Terminal one block west of the current structure. It would inconvenience current bus commuters the least, and would meet the expected increase in demand.

It is increasingly likely that the Port Authority will be called upon to play the lead role in the Gateway tunnel project, as well as the new Port Authority Bus Terminal, and the major renovations planned at LaGuardia and JFK airports. For that reason, it is imperative that we enact Port Authority reform legislation that addresses not only structural and ethical issues, but also transportation planning and oversight of the billions in toll dollars and government grants that will go into these projects.

What our legislation seeks to do, more than anything else, is seek to ensure that the Port Authority can meet the transportation needs of the region professionally and efficiently, while providing an opportunity for elected officials, transportation experts, commuters, and the public to exercise proper oversight over an agency whose decision making for too long has been hidden from view.

The Gordon-Weinberg proposal provides for legislative oversight by requiring senior Port Authority officials to testify before legislative committees, and it gives legislators and the public an opportunity to provide meaningful comment on capital plan priorities before capital plans are adopted.

It makes clear that meeting the region's transportation needs is the Port Authority's chief mission -- not economic development. The Christie-Cuomo Special Panel was right to recommend that the Port Authority get out of the real estate business; yet the most recent capital plan called for one-third of the Port Authority's capital budget for 2014 to 2018 to go to development at the World Trade Center site -- one-third -- with no funding provided for new rail tunnels or a new Port Authority Bus Terminal.

The legislation we propose provides for quarterly reports on the cost and progress of major capital projects, with independent mob Bus Terminal project is coming in on time and on budget. It requires an independent appraisal and advance notice of any real estate sale -- an important provision if the Port Authority follows the Special Panel's advice to sell off up to \$8 billion in real estate.

It gives the Port Authority Inspector General subpoena power and the right to compel witnesses to appear. And it gives each state a voice in the Port Authority's planning process by providing for the appointment of a Policy Liaison by each state's Transportation Commissioner to ensure that each state's legitimate transportation policy needs are properly considered.

These provisions represent our best efforts at meaningful Port Authority reform, and we will be very interested in hearing the assessment of transportation experts, commuters, and other public officials on what makes sense and what doesn't; and how this legislation can be improved. Our Bill also includes the appointment of a professional CEO; and enactment of the extensive ethics and financial disclosure reforms tha, and is sponsored, here in New Jersey, by Senator Kean.

Once hearings are completed, we hope to sit with Governors Christie and Cuomo, with Senator Kean, and our colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the Assembly, and with New York legislative leaders from both parties to agree on legislation that meets the needs of the citizens we all represent.

We believe it is important to hold public hearings to give transportation experts, commuters, and the general public an opportunity

to weigh in on the critical issue of Port Authority reform, because millions of New Jerseyans and New Yorkers rely on this agency to which they pay billions of dollars in bridge and tunnel tolls, rail and bus fares, airport fees, and cargo surcharges on the consumer products they buy.

We also believe it is important to give the public the opportunity to let the Port Authority know what they think the Port Authority's priorities should be in the revised 10-year capital plan. That is why we are here today. I, for one, need to ask why we have spent millions of dollars on a new marble palace at the World Trade Center -- the so-called *Oculus*, which was featured as a "retail cathedral" in yesterday's *Wall Street Journal*, when, at the same time, we have our commuters freezing or broiling -- depending on the season -- on the ramps of the Port Authority Bus Terminal and trying to avoid the water leaking from the ceiling.

We assure you that we are going to forward all testimony that we hear at these hearings directly to the Port Authority officials for their consideration in developing the new plan.

At this point, I'd like to turn to the other Committee members for any opening remarks they care to make, starting with my Vice Chair, Senate Majority Leader Weinberg; and then my colleague, Senate Minority Leader Kean.

Senator Weinberg.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you very much, Senator Gordon.

And if I may, I know they will all come to the microphone, but just to acknowledge in the audience my colleague in the Assembly, Valerie Huttie; our County Executive, Jim Tedesco; and a former Assembly

colleague, the former Mayor of Hasbrouck Heights, Rose Heck. Oh, sorry -- thank you for leaning over -- and Freeholder Tracy Zur. Welcome, all of you.

In his opening remarks, Senator Gordon talked about the necessity for legislative oversight -- for instance, to make sure that the hopefully planned Bus Terminal will be designed, built, in an appropriate manner. Well, none of that can happen until it gets into the capital plan. I have seen nothing on the agenda of the next Thursday meeting of the Port Authority which would suggest that the Bus Terminal is going to get into the capital plan. In fact, there is something about a "design contest" on the agenda, and no mention of the capital plan.

So I would hope that out of these hearings, perhaps in a bipartisan manner, all of the Senators -- along with our County Executive, and Freeholders, and our Assembly colleagues -- ask for a meeting directly with the Commissioners of the Port Authority -- particularly those in New Jersey. And I'd like the meeting to be at the Bus Terminal, where we all take the bus in together and let them all take the buses home to their respective places.

To hear, for instance, from the Vice Chair of the Port Authority about, "Well, maybe we should not be talking about a new Bus Terminal; maybe we should be expanding rail travel." Well, if the Vice Chair of the Port Authority knew anything about this area, he would know that most of the towns in eastern Bergen County, in District 37 -- those towns when you come over the George Washington Bridge -- have no rail travel to expand. The bus is the only way these commuters get into New York and get home from New York. And the fact that he could even consider that that is an

alternative to improving the Bus Terminal leads me to believe that the people who are in charge of a budget bigger than 26 states in the United States of America really don't know what they're doing, and don't know anything about the area that they're supposed to be governing.

So I am far from confident that what we hoped to achieve we will achieve. I think this reform legislation is a big step forward, and I would hopefully call on my colleague on the other side of the aisle, the Minority Leader, Senator Tom Kean; along with our County Executive; and all of our colleagues in the Assembly to request an in-person meeting around a table -- perhaps in a conference room or on one of the bus ramps at the Port Authority. Now, I know the last part is a little snarky and sarcastic; I'd be happy with an in-person meeting, really, in their fancy offices in the World Trade Center, if need be. But wherever it is held, let's have the meeting and let's talk about the 110,000 people who go in every morning, and the 110,000 people who try to come home every night -- and what they have to put up with.

So for me, two years is a long time. And we better do something to move forward. And I have seen no evidence and, unfortunately, because we have an important voting session on Thursday, none of us can be there.

That's my opening statement. Thank you very much.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you, Majority Leader.

Senator Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: Thank you. It's an honor to be in Bergen County.

I've been working on issues related to the Port Authority, not only as a staff member to a member of Congress in the early 1990s, but all the way through to an individual who represented Union County -- used to be Essex County, Somerset, and Morris counties -- for nearly 15 years. And the issues associated with the entirety of the Port Authority are not new to anybody who has ever been on the bus, ever been on the ferry, ever been in a tunnel, ever been in an airport. But what is clear is that we need-- These issues-- Now, everybody in this room knows I introduced the hybrid legislation back in March; the New York version of the bill was based on that version. And it's frustrating, I think, to commuters and citizens alike that we are so long in this process.

The key is that this should-- New Jersey Commissioners -- of which the Vice Chair is not a New Jersey resident -- is only half the battle. This is a regional entity that should be focusing on the needs of the entire region, and it needs transparency, it needs accountability, it needs a top-to-bottom straight governing structure that would not be beholden to the type of potential interference that has existed, on occasion, for the last two decades and more.

So my hope is that we can, on a bipartisan basis, not only bring in the New Jersey Commissioners, but make sure it's a bipartisan, bi-state approach to having the appropriate solution. I believe that the legislation that I have introduced -- modeled and then introduced -- is the right approach. This is an issue that should be done immediately, and we need to make sure that there is a transportation solution, which is the primary focus of this entity now; and going forward, should be to make sure that people can get in and out of that city -- whether by bus, whether by rail, whether

by getting to the airports; or making sure the goods are shipped in an efficient manner. The Port Authority is all of that, and our solution, I believe, is we make it focused on transportation, we make sure it has a single, responsible modern corporate structure of accountability. And one that is a hybrid solution, towards the legislative as well as Cuomo-Christie approach, is the right approach.

And the *New York Times* has advocated for months now that we should act -- and it's very unusual for me to say we should follow the lead of the *New York Times* (laughter), but we should simply act.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you, Senator Kean.

Senator Weinberg, did you just want to--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Just a point: If I intimated that I thought we should only meet with half of the Commissioners, I didn't mean to leave that impression. My request would be to meet with all of the Commissioners. I just singled out the New York Vice Chair because he seemed to know so little about the area serviced by the Bus Terminal. But I did mean all of the Commissioners. So I agree with you on that, as well as the *New York Times*. (laughter)

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Senator Sarlo, any comments?

SENATOR SARLO: Yes, thank you, Senator Gordon and to my colleagues.

I know my colleagues have spent a lot of time on this reform legislation dealing with the transparency issues at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. But I continue to sort of beat the drum here on

the Port Authority needing to return to its core mission of moving people in and out of Manhattan to work, to places of recreation, and back to New Jersey safely -- and vice versa.

You know, as the economy comes back, we all know that New Jersey's economy is lagging behind the rest of the nation. But clearly the economy in Manhattan is booming again. I say this all the time; I see it in my community, I see it in a lot of the communities in South Bergen. In 2010, 2011, 2012, the bus stops were empty. Now there are 10, 15, 20 people waiting in line right down the boulevards, through Hasbrouck Heights, through Wood-Ridge, waiting to get on a bus. Many of the folks who live in our communities -- not just the eastern part of Bergen, but in South Bergen as well -- use the bus.

SENATOR KEAN: Union County as well.

SENATOR SARLO: As well as Union County -- to get to and from work. And when we all know the condition of the Bus Terminal -- it's been very well documented -- to not see it as part of the capital plan, and to see it constantly get pushed aside for projects such as moving folks from Wall Street to the Newark Airport -- which makes no sense to me -- and putting money towards that instead of putting that money as seed money to start the construction of the Bus Terminal-- Clearly the Port Authority is misguided, and they need to go back to their core mission and focus in on moving people safely and efficiently from their places of residence to their places of work, to their places of recreation, to airports, to move them out of this area to other parts of the country and the world. And that's what they should be focusing on.

Get out of the real estate business; go back to moving people to and from work, to and from places of recreation. And by fixing the Bus Terminal, you're going to take care of a lot of hardworking people in North Jersey who use the bus, day in and day out. This capital pl maybe the Senate will have to amend to for them. I know we'll do it in a bipartisan basis. But this capital plan needs to be amended to include the Bus Terminal once and for all.

Thank you.

SENATOR KEAN: If I may, through the Chair.

SENATOR GORDON: Senator Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: If I may add a point to Senator Weinberg.

One of the things that we did do when the Port Authority had its meetings during, shall we say, the odd days of the week -- Monday, Wednesday, Friday, versus Tuesday or Thursday in this instance -- is we both were there pushing for the version that is the one-block away from-- This is months ago -- pushing for the version of the Bus Terminal that's one block away. It's the most efficient, it's the-- Making sure it's in New York; versus in New Jersey, so the people would have two- or three-stop rides if they went down any other path.

So this is an issue that is very, very important for commuters throughout the region.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

I'd like to begin bringing some witnesses up. We're pleased to have the County Executive of Bergen, Jim Tedesco, here -- who is in between meetings, and so I'd like to bring him up first.

County Executive, we are pleased to have you here -- although this is really home for you; we realize that. (laughter)

SENATOR WEINBERG: He's probably not used to being on that side of the dais. (laughter)

J A M E S J. T E D E S C O I I I: I'm used to sitting on that side (gestures), and everybody is yelling at me up there.

First, let me thank all the Senators for coming to Bergen County -- my three colleagues from Bergen County, thank you; and to the rest of the Senators, thank you for coming up to Bergen County.

And I say that because I know, Senator Kean, you said many people take the bus out of Union County. And I know you're right; as well as Middlesex and other places. But there are no two counties that are more affected by what happens at the Port Authority than Bergen and Hudson counties -- none. Because there are facilities that reside in those two counties, and hundreds of thousands of people from those counties move back and forth between New York and New Jersey.

And so as I address you today, it's, for me, challenging. Because, as I sat and listened to all of you talk, and I looked at my prepared statement, I almost am tempted to discontinue my prepared statement and talk to you about the way I feel in regards to how the State Legislators have supported, in the long term, the issues that we face here in Bergen and Hudson counties with the Port Authority.

And I know that you said that you've gone back 15 years -- or maybe longer -- with issues regarding the Port Authority. I can't say that I've gone back that long, although my daughter had to take the bus from Route 17 and Ridgewood Avenue in Paramus to the Port Authority for a

good part of 12 years. And she used to tell me the horror stories about going into the Bus Terminal as a young woman.

I will refer to my prepared remarks because I believe that they will show why the people of Bergen County need your support; why Bergen County and the rest of the state need you to help drive the bus to help change what's taken place there for so many years. And because it's affecting the constituents of New Jersey, not New York, I believe it's our obligation to be the bus drivers.

So let me start.

Bergen County has more people than any other county in New Jersey -- and that population grows exponentially when including visitors and the traveling public.

As the Bergen County Executive, I know I have a fundamental responsibility -- as do all the people in this room -- to demand that our transportation infrastructure networks meet the needs of the people we serve, accommodates predicted transportation and population trends, and is prepared to withstand or handle changes and emergency situations. And you'll hear me talk about emergency situations, which are tremendously affected by what takes place with the Port Authority.

Safe, efficient, convenient transportation contributes to economic growth and quality of life. When our transportation infrastructure does not meet the needs of our region, the consequences aren't just traffic jams or longer commutes. The failure to maintain and upgrade our roads, bridges, tunnels, and public transit affect all of us. What we have right now is not good enough.

It is long past time for the Port Authority to step up and address the needs of nearly 1 million Bergen County residents I represent. I'm here today to put my full-throated support behind Senate Bill 3066 and Assembly Bill A-4637, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Transparency and Accountability Act of 2015. Senators Loretta Weinberg and Bob Gordon, Assembly member Valerie Huttle, Tim Eustace, and Joe Lagana all represent Bergen County and understand what our shared constituents need. This legislation will bring about positive changes to an agency that many Bergen County residents rely upon for daily travel.

Unfortunately, the Port Authority has made it its agency practice to operate in secret, informing stakeholders about critical decisions and policy changes as they are being implemented or after they have been finalized.

Two years ago, I had the opportunity to go to a Port Authority meeting with Senator Weinberg and Assemblyman Wisniewski -- also Assemblyman Johnson. It was one week after I was elected to sit right where you're sitting. As I talked to the members of the Commission, I thought I was sitting in a funeral home with a bunch of undertakers. (laughter)

**ASSEMBLYWOMAN VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE:**  
(off mike) Excuse me. (laughter) (Indiscernible) at all.

**SENATOR GORDON:** There's at least one.

**SENATOR SARLO:** At least one.

**MR. TEDESCO:** I addressed them, I asked them, I pleaded with them. And at the end, I asked and said to them, "Remember, the cover-up is worse than the crime." And what I was getting at with them is,

we were asking them to talk to us, to tell us what was happening. The silence was deafening. And today we know what played out.

That is the model that that agency works under. You don't work under that model; no one should work under that model. That model needs to change.

As I made clear in my testimony, their behavior was unacceptable and it still is unacceptable. Even with the spotlight shining and burning bright on that agency, they have been slow to react. And there has been some -- some minor reform. But I think what you're asking for, and what you're pushing for, is going in the right direction. Because if you don't do it, no one else is going to do it.

The days of last-minute hearings, surprise toll increases, and unilateral decisions to increase public transit fares or eliminate routes without community input must be over. In addition to changing the way the agency interacts with the public about policy, it needs to modernize. According to the first paragraph of the agency's own recent special report on its future, it said, "The Port Authority must recommit itself to its core mission of facilitating transit through the region for millions of commuters, visitors, and cargo carriers who rely on its transportation infrastructure, ensuring that these facilities are worthy of the people and the businesses they serve." That's in their mission. It doesn't say that they're going to be real estate holdings (*sic*). It doesn't say that they're going to build multi-billion dollar buildings. It says transportation infrastructure -- ensuring these facilities are worthy of the people and the business.

I say to you today, I don't see that. But these are their words.

The agency needs to look closely at operations and facilities that do not contribute to its express core mission. Selling antiquated or ancillary facilities, and streamlining outdated or unrelated operations could help fund projects that do fall under the agency's mission and better serve the people who rely on them daily.

Canceling the ARC tunnel was a shortsighted mistake. We will never, ever get out from underneath that. But there's hope. The Port Authority has the opportunity to help right that wrong and increase trans-Hudson capacity by supporting the Gateway project. When complete, this project will expand capacity during morning and evening peak hours. It is the right thing to do, and we cannot hesitate to begin that work. This project also has my full support.

Many residents I represent in Bergen County's Gold Coast communities rely on ferry transport to cross the Hudson River for work or leisure. We believe that there is a demand for increased ferry operations serving eastern Bergen County communities like Edgewater and Fort Lee, as well as neighboring towns in northern Hudson County -- an excellent opportunity for the Port Authority to look at other means to help people cross the river.

As such, we have been working with our partners at NJTPA, including the Port Authority, to study the potential impact of expanded transit and cargo transportation by water. I sit as the representative of Bergen County on the NJTPA, as a voting member. And we're asking them to look at how do we use water in a better means.

I'm glad to see the work is underway to upgrade the George Washington Bridge bus tunnel. It's one of the few projects that actually

something is happening, and it's actually on time and on budget. The busiest bridge in the world needs a first-class bus terminal to encourage and support the use of public transit across it -- the busiest bridge in the world.

We need to ensure that people who go across that bridge every day are safe and secure, but also can go to a public facility that protects and allows them to be able to continue their trip. It will be better for the environment, better accommodate the needs of disabled passengers, and make public transportation a more appealing option for all.

One of the things we don't talk about is, you improve the bus system, and you improve the rail system -- we're going to get more people to use it. I met with New Jersey Transit. They told me, "You give me the riders, we'll give you the trains, we'll give you the buses." I said, "I will."

So we have to look at: If we make our ability to have mass transit work for the people, more people will take advantage of that.

The next step must be to address the inefficiencies at the midtown Port Authority Bus Station. Given that that rush-hour crowd can number 90,000 and involve 600 bus movements, there is little, if any, margin for error. This creates a situation where even the slightest incident can cause major delays for commuters on both sides of the Hudson. People in North Jersey and throughout New York City's five boroughs feel the impact when anything goes wrong there; and people are late, missing work or time with loved ones -- and we all feel the cost.

I'm grateful for Senator Weinberg's continued leadership on the need to improve this Terminal. This project is not political, and I hope all stakeholders will join her -- and us -- in support of moving this forward.

While these issues I've raised today all relate to the Port Authority, these are not the sum-total of transportation needs here in Bergen County. I do not want to miss an opportunity to mention two other priorities that are closely linked to the transportation infrastructure managed by the Port Authority. And I say this because there's a bridge being built with Port Authority funds -- because we're able to extend a viaduct -- that says we could use State funds and other funds to build this. Well, I will tell you, as we sit here today in Bergen County there is a highway that connects Port Newark and Port Elizabeth to Canada. That when the Canadian trucks come down from Canada, they come down the New York State Thruway; they come down Route 17, connect with the Turnpike, and go to Port Elizabeth and Port Newark. We're talking about international trade that goes through here. We've asked, for many, many years, for a two-lane road to be modernized and widened. We go from two lanes to five; we go from five, to two. I point that out to you because that affects traffic all the way to the Lincoln Tunnel and the George Washington Bridge. You can't get to the Lincoln Tunnel or the George Washington Bridge from anywhere in central or northern Bergen County without taking that road. This State road is one of the most highly trafficked in New Jersey and essentially acts as an extension of our ports, accommodating trucks traveling to Newark and New York state.

Second -- and I couldn't leave without saying this--

SENATOR SARLO: You're getting a good list in here -- the stuff you need done. I like it.

MR. TEDESCO: The Bergen portion of what was proposed as the Bergen-Hudson Light Rail -- which is now only the Hudson Light Rail

project -- is long overdue, and we need our State and Federal leaders to continue to work with us to get this done. And the reason I bring this up, is because when you look at this map (indicates) -- this is the map of the Bergen County section. Hundreds of thousands of people live along this rail line who commute to New York. If this rail line was in existence, we could take cars and we could take people off the roads, use this Light Rail to get them to trans-Hudson crossings -- either by PATH, by ferry, or by other means. Today, this does not exist. I hope, with your help, while I'm the County Executive, we could make this happen.

So I thank you all for giving me time to address you. I apologize a little bit for my passion and my emotion. But you could see that this is not something that, for me, is just a political issue; this is something that's critical to the people of Bergen County and the people of North Jersey for quality of life and for their safety.

Thank you, Senators.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you, County Executive. We appreciate your passion.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: Nice job, Jim.

SENATOR GORDON: Does anyone on the Committee have any questions for the County Executive?

Senator Sarlo.

SENATOR SARLO: I just want to make one-- I know we're here to talk about the Port Authority, but I can't help just mentioning that you laid out some big-ticket items that are so important to the economy here in North Jersey -- in Bergen County alone. But if we, as a Legislature, with this Governor, do not renew this TTF, forget these big projects. Just

everyday maintaining of the roads and bridges of Bergen County -- without that money, you're going to be struggling.

So it's so critical. This TTF renewal is probably one of the most critical things as a Legislature we need to act upon. Because County Execs and County Freeholders are going to be screaming, quite frankly, because they're going to end up having to shut roads, and more bridges, and the like in counties -- Bergen, Passaic, Hudson -- all throughout the State of New Jersey.

So you have great passion for a lot of big projects that we all support up here. I know I support them; I know many of the Senators support them. And all of that could be accomplished with a renewed TTF.

So thank you for your passion.

SENATOR GORDON: Senator Weinberg.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, I have two comments.

Thank you for being here; thank you for attending that meeting. It's just about two years--

MR. TEDESCO: Almost, Senator; yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --this date -- or in November, because you were already elected as a Freeholder, but not yet sworn in. So you weren't playing politics, because you weren't running -- you had your three-year term ahead of you, so you didn't have to worry.

And you came to that meeting, and I remember how quickly you picked up. I won't do it now, but I could almost verbatim give the speech that you gave because I was so impressed.

But let me say something about passion -- which I hope my opening remarks showed I share with you. But when Steve Gardner, the

Vice President of Amtrak, came before our Committee and somebody here asked, "What is it you need from us?" he said, "We need the people and the passion" to follow through on these issues. Well, I think we're proving, through this Committee, through the bipartisan effort, and through people like you as our County Executive, that we have the people and the passion. And we're not going to lose it until we get to that goal.

So thank you very much, County Executive.

MR. TEDESCO: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

MR. TEDESCO: Thank you, Senators.

SENATOR GORDON: I normally would start calling on our elected officials, but I see in the back a friend -- a recognized expert on transportation policy. And I know he has a class to teach late this afternoon at Saint Peter's College (*sic*). This is Professor Dr. Phil Plotch, a resident of Fairlawn.

SENATOR WEINBERG: I'm sure that helped, too. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: He directs the Public Administration program at Saint Peter's, and I have to provide a plug.

**PHILIP MARK PLOTCH, Ph.D.:** Thanks.

SENATOR GORDON: He's the author of *Politics Across the Hudson*, which is an interesting study of the Tappan Zee Bridge project -- which demonstrates that there hasn't been much change, in some areas, since 1921 -- and available on *Amazon.com*. (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: After that plug -- a project that was intentionally kept out of the purview of the Port Authority. The

boundaries were intentionally formed not to include the Tappan Zee Bridge.

SENATOR GORDON: He will tell you that this project was built, what, a few feet beyond the 25-mile limit of the Port Authority just so it would not be embroiled in Port Authority politics.

Professor Plotch.

DR. PLOTCH: Okay. Thank you, Senator, and thanks for inviting me.

I just want to say that although I can be quite critical of the Port Authority, I appreciate what I think is a remarkable job they do -- helping to move people and goods reliably, and efficiently, and safely in the metropolitan area.

I'd like to share my thoughts on two different things this afternoon, and they are related to each other. First, on the need to increase transparency; and second, on the priorities for the Port Authority.

I have very mixed feelings about the Port Authority and public authorities, in general. They can build projects faster, and they can obtain more resources, and they can do them more efficiently than State agencies. They also take better care of their facilities. Many State agencies have allowed their infrastructures to deteriorate, which just ends up costing us more in the long-term.

But because of the way that authorities are funded, they can become more accountable to their bondholders rather than to the general public. In the New York metropolitan area, the authorities' interest in generating more revenues has undermined the region's efforts to reduce the

number of cars on its roads -- which is important for both the region's economy and its environment.

I applaud your efforts to increase the Port Authority's transparency. At a minimum, the Port should be subject to the OPRA laws and the FOIL laws.

I also think that the legislatures -- both of them -- should require the Port Authority to provide more information about its services and its planning efforts. The Port Authority should provide the same type of information that New York state law requires the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to provide. If you look at Section 1269-d of New York's Public Authorities Law -- that's 1269-d, New York's Public Authorities Law -- you will see that the MTA must prepare annual strategic plans and provide information about on-time performance, and cleanliness, and safety, crowding, and other performance issues.

I personally know how frustrating it can be to obtain basic information from the Port Authority. I'm going to tell you two very recent stories.

A few months ago, a reporter asked me about the increased crowding at PATH stations in Jersey City; with all the development, the crowding is getting worse. I figured I could answer his questions by getting some data from the Port Authority's website. I was surprised and disappointed to find that the Port didn't provide that information on its site.

But I did remember that the Port had conducted an Environmental Impact Statement for the World Trade Center station. So I figured I could find some relevant information from that document. But I

couldn't find the EIS on its web site, which surprised me because the PATH station isn't even done yet.

So I contacted the Port Authority, and after waiting much longer than I expected, I received the EIS.

Now, any other agency would have sent me a PDF document that had been converted from a Word document. If you're familiar with that, you could just go to the PDF document and you could search on words. So you could search on "ridership," "Journal Square," "Grove Street" -- and you get a sense of what their ridership has been in the past.

But that's not what the Port Authority did. They had put the 2,416 pages through a scanner -- like you scan photos. So when I looked at the EIS document, I couldn't search on any of the words. And when I asked the Port Authority about it, they said they would not give me an electronic version that I could search on.

Now, the Port had to send me an EIS because it was related to a federally funded project; and Federal law requires the Port Authority to make the EIS available to the public. But they did it in a way that was most inconvenient for me, purposely.

SENATOR WEINBERG: How long ago was that? Can you--

DR. PLOTCH: This was-- I think it was in the late spring. I have an e-mail; if you want, I could--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Of this year?

DR. PLOTCH: Yes, yes -- it was this year.

SENATOR WEINBERG: That's the improved Port Authority, by the way. (laughter) I just wanted to get the dates straight on that.

Okay, thank you. Sorry.

DR. PLOTCH: Sure.

So I know you'd like input on the Port's capital priorities. You talked about the rail and the bus, and there are others, too, obviously. But if the public and the legislators cannot obtain basic information, we can't really give you an informed opinion.

Let's take the proposed AirTrain at LaGuardia, as an example. Earlier this year, New York's Governor Cuomo announced that the Port would be building a new \$450 million LaGuardia AirTrain. A reporter from WNYC asked me what I thought about it. So to provide a well-thought out answer, I said I just needed to get some more information about the proposal, and I requested it from the Port Authority. I'm still waiting.

I suspect that this \$450 million project would probably cost more than \$1 billion. And I don't think that this new AirTrain would save travelers any time, compared to the existing taxis and shuttle buses, since LaGuardia is only four miles from Manhattan.

Maybe it makes sense to build the LaGuardia AirTrain. Maybe extending the PATH to Newark Airport is also a worthwhile investment. The trouble is that the Port Authority isn't providing us with the information that we need to give this informed opinion.

So whether or not these are worthwhile projects, Cuomo's announcement exposes how the governors of New York and New Jersey are using Port Authority funds to promote their own pet projects -- rather than as part of a coordinated effort to improve the region.

I used to work on redevelopment at the World Trade Center site. I was the Director of World Trade Center Redevelopment at the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation. And I remember the two

governors making a deal to split \$6 billion of Port Authority funds. The deal was \$3 billion would be used for the ARC project, and \$3 billion would bring the JFK AirTrain to Lower Manhattan. Neither project is going anywhere; so the \$3 billion and \$3 billion went up for grabs again by the two governors.

A more rational way to allocate funding is to develop a sense of priorities in a transparent way. To do so, the Port needs to provide more information about the problems it's trying to solve and the potential solutions to solving those problems.

To help the legislators and the public compare various options, we're going to need information about the costs and benefits of these potential solutions. The kinds of cost information you need include capital costs, ongoing subsidies, and also a realistic assessment of the Port's ability to leverage other funding sources. The benefits include those relating to ridership, travel-time savings, and the improvement to both the environment and the economy.

When we get this information, we may find a tendency for the Port Authority to overestimate the benefits of its favorite projects, and to underestimate the costs of its favorite projects. That's why I suggest that the two state legislatures should set aside funds to have outside experts independently review the Port's estimates, and the assumptions behind these estimates. This will add even more transparency to the decision-making process.

I do hope that the Port Authority prioritizes projects that simultaneously provide benefits to both states. The Port is the only entity

with the resources, the jurisdiction, and the responsibility to improve both rail and bus services across the Hudson River.

But I'm a bit cynical after writing *Politics Across the Hudson*. The book is a story about how New York wanted to build a new rail crossing over the -- a new Tappan Zee Bridge over the Hudson River, because at that location, the rail line would stay within New York's borders. At the same time, New Jersey officials preferred ARC, a new rail tunnel under the Hudson River to Penn Station.

Transportation planners in the region overwhelmingly preferred the ARC project because it was expected to carry 10 times as many passengers as a new rail line over the Tappan Zee.

As part of my book, I interviewed the agency heads, I interviewed three former governors of New York -- I interviewed a lot of people to understand what happened. But sometimes the things they said to me made my head spin. I asked the senior aides to two different governors, "Why didn't New York help promote the ARC project?" One said to me, "It's New Jersey; who cares?" Another said to me, "If we said it's a good project, then we would have had to help pay for it."

SENATOR SARLO: Are you able to disclose who you spoke with, or is that in the book?

DR. PLOTCH: One is in the book, and one is anonymous. But I would be happy to tell offline.

SENATOR SARLO: Okay.

SENATOR GORDON: Which page? (laughter)

MR. MAGYAR (Committee Aide): Which page? Right?

SENATOR WEINBERG: How come I'm not shocked?

DR. PLOTCH: So obviously, it's shortsighted for the region.

Manhattan's commercial success relies upon attracting workers from a wide geographical area. And New Jersey residents who work in New York pay income taxes on their salaries to New York, not to New Jersey. But instead of cooperating on one project, the two states competed. Nobody won; instead, we both lost.

Now, I'm delighted to see that you're working with your counterparts across the river on ways to increase the Port's transparency, because I'm hoping that, going forward, we're all going to be winners.

Thanks.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much, Professor Plotch.

I have one question. You said that, in your experience, authorities are generally better at maintaining their infrastructure than State agencies.

DR. PLOTCH: Yes.

SENATOR GORDON: One thing that I'm really baffled by is how the Port Authority allowed the condition of the terminal to deteriorate. I mean, it's certainly obvious to anyone who is standing on one of those ramps, or attempting to go up an escalator, that the facility is at its capacity; it has not been maintained well. How is it that the Port Authority allowed it to get in that condition? And what I'm really confused about is, how is it that it never made the capital plan?

DR. PLOTCH: So the options are so incredibly expensive, which is why it's not in the capital plan right now.

The Port Authority also allowed the George Washington Bridge bus terminal to deteriorate. So obviously the Port Authority and authorities don't always take care of their bridges. The example in my book is the Tappan Zee Bridge, which they allowed to deteriorate. But I think for the most part, State agencies tend to have a four- or a two-year timeframe because that's the tenure of the elected officials. The Port Authority tends to have a longer timeframe, and tends to think about keeping their facilities in better shape. Not always, but usually.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay.

Senator Weinberg.

SENATOR WEINBERG: I know you said because it's so incredibly expensive. I also think it's because they just didn't pay any attention, because I don't think they ride through the Bus Terminal -- any of them.

And it wasn't until, really, constituents, grassroots people kind of overflowed with their hostility as to what was going on there that we were able to bring it to their attention. I mean, somebody there might have noticed -- I don't know how they counted it, but there were 36 ceiling leaks. And the general disrepair in the restrooms; and the long lines; and there are escalators you have to take up to the bus platforms, and the lines get so long they have to turn the escalators off so that they don't sandwich people up at the upper platform.

So I can't believe that it was only money -- and don't let me underestimate the money -- but they seem to have found \$4 billion for that very elegant station in the World Trade Center. So the old story about the squeaky wheel gets greased -- it seems to take an uprising to get their

attention. And I'm very proud of our constituents who actually became so noisy that everybody had to listen to them.

So I think it's a lot more than just money; and I don't mean to underestimate that. But I whispered to Senator Gordon, while you were testifying, "Maybe he would like to become a Commissioner on the Port Authority." (laughter) We would be very happy to have your expertise there.

DR. PLOTCH: Thanks.

SENATOR GORDON: I have another question. I'd like to take advantage of your historical perspective.

We have seen competition between New York and New Jersey -- the Port Authority -- for a long time. I mean, I recall reading in Jim Doig's book about the rivalry between New York and New Jersey -- about how they were going to construct the George Washington Bridge, because New Jersey wanted the cable work to go to the Roebling plant in Trenton. And it certainly came -- this rivalry came to a head, and became truly dysfunctional for the agency recently when we saw the manifestation of it in Bridgegate.

Do you have any thoughts on how we can minimize that? I know we're making some changes to the structure of the Port Authority Board and the senior leadership. How do we minimize the rivalry while still allowing each state to have some parity of influence over decision making?

DR. PLOTCH: So I can give you one suggestion.

So you're probably all familiar with the North Jersey transportation planning authority. It's called the Metropolitan Planning Organization for North Jersey; and the County Executive is a member of

that. New York has its own metropolitan planning organization; it's called the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council. Unfortunately, they are separate institutions, and there is not a lot of coordination. So New York plans for its region; its region includes Montauk -- which is about 100 miles away from Midtown Manhattan -- but New York's region does not include Fort Lee, which is about a mile from New York's region.

So New York is doing its planning for the downstate area; North Jersey is doing its planning for the northern part of New Jersey; but the two aren't coordinating their plans. So there's actually no-- Which is really shocking to a lot of people. There is no regional entity that does regional coordinated plans. The Regional Plan Association is a private institution; it's a wonderful institution, but it's private and it has its own interests.

The Port Authority sort of fills the gap because there is no entity. But the Port Authority has its own interests in mind; they have their own fiduciary interests in mind. So what I think would be wonderful is if we had more coordination, and we could get that coordination only through the work of both state legislatures -- that, say, these two entities have to create a regional plan for New York that includes both New York and New Jersey.

SENATOR GORDON: Wouldn't we need the support of the two governors for that as well?

DR. PLOTCH: Yes.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

SENATOR KEAN: And the two legislatures.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

SENATOR KEAN: And I think we-- I'm sorry, sir.

SENATOR GORDON: I don't see much of a challenge in the two-- I think the challenge of getting the two legislatures to work together may be less than the two governors, because one is just not around.  
(laughter)

DR. PLOTCH: There actually used to be an organization which did tri-state planning -- New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut; there was a tri-state organization. Connecticut dropped out, and then it became bi-state. And then New Jersey didn't want to be part of the New York planning organization anymore, so New Jersey dropped out.

But maybe baby steps. Maybe bringing the two organizations together, having one consolidated plan that they could each buy into. And it means not just the institutions themselves, but it means the people behind those institutions -- so the County Executives are behind it, the legislators are behind it, and the governors, and the transportation agencies are behind it.

So, North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority and the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay; an excellent idea.

Any further questions or comments?

SENATOR KEAN: If I may.

SENATOR GORDON: Senator.

SENATOR KEAN: Through the Chair -- and I look forward to reading your book after-- And you're right: It was built to be just outside-- The whole reason the 25 miles is 25 miles is that the Tappan Zee Bridge was there.

Now, the question is-- Part of what caused problems over the course of the last couple of decades was that the Port Authority was dragged in a variety of different directions away from its core mission. I mean, the thought process that governors would not have a role in the Port Authority's decision -- in part because not only the competition of the appointment of the Commissioners, confirmation by the legislatures. But sometimes some of that creative tension is important. I mean, when the World Trade Center was first built, PATH was the agreement on the New Jersey side. And that would not have happened had the two governors not been involved in those direct conversations, because those were not Port Authority priorities at the time -- neither the World Trade Center, nor the PATH.

A decade or more later, the ferries exist because New York had -- the Port Authority had some priorities, and New York had some priorities. And we thought that an additional way-- To get back to, I think, Mr. Tedesco's comments regarding more access on the waterways, to make sure that New Jersey has greater access to get across the rivers.

But I think the most important way that you can get to focus on transportation, through the Chair, is the straight-down corporate structure without inappropriate political influence. One of the proposals in, I guess, the bill that's under consideration, at some point, is to have functional ministers of that portfolio wandering around the Port Authority -- from New York and from New Jersey -- theoretically with transportation experience, but that could-- You know, résumés are résumés.

If you really wanted to focus on regional authority -- because while I think that the-- I like your idea about the regional entities actually

being regional entities. I think that you'll quickly run into gridlock -- first within New York, and then potentially within in New Jersey, and then both. And so seeing that the Port Authority is the only thing that's left, wouldn't you be concerned about any vehicle that would allow for more political considerations to be put in play at a variety of levels, versus a straight, top-down, accountable to -- the CEO, who could then be fired, and a Board of Commissions that could be fired?

Because one of the great things about the Port Authority now, and going forward, is six-six, right? Those Commissioners are not supposed to be separate; they're supposed to be together in a way that's focused on a regional entity that's greater than the six -- each Commissioner; and then with governors, with the power of minutes -- to veto those minutes. So the mechanism can work. And with the legislature and its oversight rule, especially in the Senate, confirming people in both New York and New Jersey -- that's the goal. That's efficiency, that's regional transportation focus, whether it be on in-and-out, Port Authority, airports, etc.

But I have great concerns regarding anything that would allow undue outside influence by people without portfolios going in and adding their thumbs on the scale. That seems to me to be one of the things that got us in this position 20-some-odd years ago.

Is that a-- Do you have a concern about that at all?

DR. PLOTCH: Well, I wouldn't want to be Executive Director of an authority and have governor's aides walking around my office, sort of undermining what I'm trying to do. That certainly--

SENATOR GORDON: Well, those individuals without portfolio-- And I should say I am not wedded to that concept at all. In

fact, I was hoping to generate some debate about this concept about whether it makes sense or not. Those individuals would not have any authority within the organization to avoid the kind of Wildstein-Baroni problems that we saw.

DR. PLOTCH: Yes.

SENATOR GORDON: But the hope was -- at least, theoretically -- is that these two liaisons, appointed by the respective Transportation Commissioners, would be able to communicate the priorities of each state; not at the Board level, but at several levels below the level at which options are actually debated and key decisions are made -- before they go upstairs. That was one idea that a number of us had; you know, if there's another approach, I'm certainly open to hearing other ideas.

SENATOR SARLO: If I may, Chairman.

SENATOR GORDON: Sure.

SENATOR SARLO: I don't what to kind of drag this out any longer.

SENATOR KEAN: Through the Chair, I didn't mean--

SENATOR SARLO: But I actually -- I agree with Senator Kean, there, on some of his points -- that the Port Authority is the right agency to deal with these regional planning issues. They have great engineers there; they have great maintenance folks; they have great designers. It's just that they've lost their way -- they've lost their way and gotten away from what their core mission could be. Because they've had some great engineers over the years; some of the finest around who know how to design and know how to get things done. But unfortunately,

they've kind of swayed from what their core mission was -- outside political interference--

SENATOR WEINBERG: *Kind of swayed?* (laughter)

SENATOR SARLO: They *have* swayed; I'm trying to be polite. They have swayed from what their core mission is. And you're always going to need some type of political influence there; let's face it, right? Because you're controlling the purse strings, right? And we have to report to constituencies, so there's oversight through the Commissioners who go there; but clearly not on the day-to-day, making the decisions of what engineering, what maintenance, what planning decisions need to be done.

Take the political interference out of that end of it, and put the money towards what projects are necessary. Come up with a real plan for the region -- even if it's outside of some of their areas. I'm not saying they have to fund it, but recommend to the DOT, recommend to the New York Metropolitan Authority, "Hey, this is a project that would help this region." They have the resources there, and they have the brains, and the energy, and the resources to do it. But they've just, as Senator Weinberg said, they've completely swayed from their core mission.

But that's the agency that should return to that and get this done. We don't need to create other agencies; I understand there are a lot of other different planning authorities. But I think that is the agency -- once we put them and get them back on to where they should be.

SENATOR GORDON: Senator Weinberg, did you have a comment?

SENATOR KEAN: I guess that's a continuation of my question.

SENATOR WEINBERG: I'm sorry?

SENATOR KEAN: Again, I was saying it's a continuation of my question.

Go ahead, Senator Weinberg.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay. First of all, I'm glad Senator Sarlo took the opportunity to compliment the professional staff there. Because I think there are people with years of experience who have done their jobs in the best possible way under, sometimes, poor circumstances. So I want to make clear that we separate out that professional staff for all the good things that they've accomplished and the great building projects.

And if anybody read the *Bergen Record* this morning, there is a whole big story about the huge amounts of heavy equipment that drives over the GW Bridge, carrying thousands of pounds of stuff -- from steel girders, in and out -- that are needed in New York for various building projects. It's a very interesting article of how they queue up to get over the GW Bridge.

And as Senator Gordon spoke about, the whole political issue has been the most difficult for us to deal with in our legislation -- to make sure that we have a professional CEO, and yet that the governors of both states have a chance to give input on what their priorities are as the Chief Executive Officers of their respective states.

But having said that, this legislation that is before us requires 60 to 120 days for oversight and public input on any capital plan. And that's for the Legislature to do. Some people could call that *political interference*; I call it doing the public's business and helping to bring a

spotlight for the public, and giving the public a venue to come and tell us what they think is right or wrong with whatever that capital plan might be.

How important, in this legislative scheme, do you think is to have this adequate time for the Legislature to have this kind of oversight of what's going on there?

DR. PLOTCH: So I think the transparency doesn't begin when the capital program is published; obviously, it has to be part of a long-term planning process where they're developing their priorities, they're explaining to people what their constraints are and saying, "This is how much money we have, and these are the different kinds of things we could do with that money. And these are the difficult choices that we've been making, and these are the things that we're looking at."

It should be a continuous process, it should be comprehensive, it should be coordinated, and it should be done in a public way.

SENATOR GORDON: Any other questions or comments? (no response)

Professor Plotch, thank you very much. We'll let you get back to your students. Thank you very much for your very useful testimony.

At this point, I'd like to call up Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttel of the 37th District.

When the history of Port Authority reform is written -- at least, the next chapter -- Assemblywoman Huttel will be viewed as the mother of reform.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: Whoa.  
(laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: Loretta's the mother.

SENATOR GORDON: Because--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: I'm the daughter -- the daughter. (laughter)

MR. MAGYAR: The kid sister.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: That's right -- sisters.

SENATOR GORDON: I say that only because I think it's important to recognize that, in 2011, when the extraordinary toll increases were first proposed, it was Assemblywoman Huttle and Senator Weinberg--

SENATOR WEINBERG: And you.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes, but I wasn't first in line. Assemblywoman Huttle was there with legislation, and holding press conferences at the Bridge and calling attention to the flaws in the process at the Port Authority. We couldn't imagine how serious the problems were in the management. But she started the process, and we thank you for that, Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: Well, thank you, and good afternoon.

And if I may just go off-script for a minute and have a brief light moment.

When County Executive Jim Tedesco said that he was at that first Port Authority meeting and it felt like he was in a roomful of undertakers -- I actually could not be there because I was playing a real

funeral director at the time. So full disclosure -- that's where I was during the first meeting. (laughter)

But with that being said, I do want to applaud this Committee for giving us here an opportunity to participate in public hearings. And this is exactly the lack of public participation that began the efforts to pass comprehensive Port Authority reform legislation. And I would like to go back, and go back to the core reason why we started this reform, in case we forgot.

In the summer of 2011, the Port Authority announced a massive toll and fare increase, that we would know would negatively impact the thousands of Bergen County commuters into New York every day. And I also want to remind everyone that the Port Authority held hearings in one single day at inconvenient times -- as we all know -- inconvenient locations, without real Port Authority leadership present to listen to those concerns.

So here we are today, four years later, doing what we were really supposed to be doing back then: giving the public a voice in the decision-making process in the Port Authority.

You know, since then the cost of one trip over the bridge has risen to \$14; and next month -- actually, December -- it will be \$15. And let's not forget, if we're going to talk about the Transit fares-- Four times it has increased since 2002; and most recently, it has increased again. Where is the transparency, where is the toll money going?

And I think that the Port Authority has been called *challenged* and *dysfunctional*. We, here, in Bergen County have experienced that extreme dysfunction and corruption playing out during Bridgegate.

And so while the Port Authority claims it's getting better, we've all seen -- since Port Authority reform legislation was first introduced -- it has been more abusive of power, less transparent, and therefore creating a greater need for rebalancing of power between New York and New Jersey at this bi-state agency. And you know, this isn't our first conversation; it certainly won't be our last conversation. But there's so much work to be done to create the accountability, the transparency, and efficiency, and the use of those commuter dollars that we were just speaking about -- the increases.

However, providing some historical perspective on where we've been with this legislation -- just a quick update. Governor Christie vetoed the Port Authority reform legislation twice -- not once, twice. And most recently, New York Governor Cuomo joined him -- together, they both vetoed the bill during the Christmas weekend hoping that no one would notice; but of course, we did.

And so we're here because we're committed to achieving comprehensive, binding Port Authority reform.

You know, when the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey was created 94 years ago, the two states agreed and pledged to act in faithful cooperation with each other to oversee the Port region. And since then, New Jersey and New York have competed for dominance and control over the ever-expanding bi-state agency and its entities. This tug-of-war has not only caused much of the dysfunction and abuse at the Authority; it also halted all major reform. If we had any real interest in New York and New Jersey -- speaking of the Governors -- in changing the culture and structure

of the Port Authority, both states would have returned that promise of that faithful cooperation.

Now, as Senator Gordon said, we have all been working closely with the New York legislature for years. They understand that New Jersey must be an equal power in the decision-making process and in the day-to-day operations of the Port Authority. However, we must also have the legislative oversight -- which we are witnessing today -- and the inclusion of the Port Authority Bus Terminal in the agency's capital plan.

And I would like to say that if it wasn't for Senator Weinberg's first bus forum last summer, I don't know if we'd be talking about this today. And I will tell you, I think Governor Kean said he's been around 15 years; he knew the Port Authority--

SENATOR GORDON: That's *Senator* Kean.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Senator Kean.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: And his father, Governor Kean, probably as well -- Governor Kean, and Senator Kean.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Good recovery. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: Yes; quick, quick. I learned from you.

However, I will tell you this. In 1979, when I went to mortuary school in the City, I commuted every day through that Bus Terminal. So what is that, 36 years ago? So I've been traveling to that Port Authority Bus Terminal 36 years ago, and I've been back there since. You would think 36 years later we would have, maybe, a new state-of-the-art facility with all of the toll increases that we've spoken about. And can I tell you? It's worse than it was 36 years ago. We're supposed to be moving forward.

So I will just say this. And we talk about Bergen County, we talk about the most populated county; we can see New York City, actually, probably from this window. The traffic -- the roads are clogged here with traffic; we have no Light Rail to alleviate any of the traffic; we don't even have enough buses to take people to the ferries. Because we created that ferry -- as a Freeholder here -- in Edgewater, which was a new ferry spot. However, people can't get to the ferry.

So we have a mess. And when I say-- I said it once; I said our infrastructure is like a third-world country. And my daughters said, "Mom, you can't say that, because have you ever been to a really third-world country?" I said, "I will refrain from ever saying that again." But I will tell you -- for the United States, and New York, and New Jersey to be that progressive, our transportation system and infrastructure is in dire need of help.

And I will also say this. For the tolls that we -- hardworking families, students, patients who go into the City to the hospital -- pay, it's outrageous that we don't get anything back for our money.

So with that being said, I don't want to be redundant because our County Executive was fabulous. And his passion and his commitment -- I am so happy that we have that. But I look around here in this room. We have a powerhouse of elected officials -- from a State level, to a County level, to a local level -- and how our voices cannot be heard is really atrocious. But I know that because of the voices that have been squeaking, as you say -- the squeaky wheel gets greased -- we have put some focus on it. But that's not enough. And so we need to continue, in a bipartisan, bi-state

effort, to reform the Port Authority and continue its mission -- because we will all suffer.

And with that, I know the hour is late and there are many speakers to speak. But again, thank you for having this oversight hearing. And with that-- I don't know, Senator Gordon, if you have a question -- but just to continue the momentum for our Port Authority reform bill.

SENATOR GORDON: I just want to, again, thank you for all that you've contributed to this effort.

I would only add to the comment that you made. You focused on the quality of life impact on commuting. And for those of us who took a tour of the Port Authority Bus Terminal last week, we encountered a woman from Monmouth County who referred to her commute as "barbaric."

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: Right.

SENATOR GORDON: That's certainly a prime concern of ours.

We also shouldn't forget that there are competitiveness issues here. You mentioned the \$15 or more that it's going to cost for the average citizen to take their car across the Bridge. The Motor Truck Association told us that the rates that a large truck pays to cross the Bridge is now, or will soon be, \$105 per unit.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: I think it's like \$80-something now.

SENATOR GORDON: And there are truck companies that are sending 100 vehicles across the Bridge every day. So we're talking about some real money. And when large corporate organizations are thinking

about whether they're going to stay in this region, or whether they're going to locate in this region -- aside from the impact on their employees of the commute, they have to think about whether it's cost-effective for them to even be here or whether it makes more sense to locate in Austin, or Charleston, or some other place with a lower cost structure.

But these are all issues that need to be uppermost in our minds.

Senator Weinberg, do you have a comment?

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, and a note to what you just said. That \$105 -- soon to be \$105 -- will be passed on to all the consumers who have goods being shipped in the back of those trucks. So we have to be cognizant of that.

But I'm glad Assemblywoman Huttle recalled some of the history, beginning in 2011, when the massive toll increase was put in for -- certainly for the bridges and tunnels. And then as we started to get further and further into Port Authority issues, where we found that the two governors were orchestrating -- bipartisan, two governors, New York and New Jersey -- were orchestrating, "We're going to ask for X so we can come in as the saviors and say, 'Okay, we'll take Y,'" and everybody would be thankful to them. That was orchestrated.

We passed, at that time, with Assemblywoman Huttle and Senator Gordon, a really pretty good -- I don't think as good as today, because of everything that we've learned since then -- but a pretty good transparency and accountability bill. Had that bill not been vetoed, maybe Bridgegate wouldn't have happened two years later. Who knows? But it's certainly a possibility.

And then fast forward to, as Valerie pointed out, Christmas week where both governors decided to veto a bill that had been passed unanimously through four houses of two states: the Assembly and Senate in New York, and the Assembly and Senate in New Jersey. Unanimously.

SENATOR GORDON: How often does that happen?

SENATOR WEINBERG: But on Christmas week, Scrooge came to visit (laughter), and they vetoed that bill -- which puts us to where we are today. And we are determined -- with your help, Valerie, and with the help of everybody up here, in a bipartisan manner -- to get the best possible bill passed. Because that's our responsibility.

So thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: And if I may, through the Chair -- just a quick note, because I see former Assemblywoman Heck. And it was 2001 when I first became a Freeholder, sitting right there (indicates). Rose would come to the meetings, and we'd talk about the Northern Branch and the Bergen-Hudson Light Rail. We have all been enduring -- advocating for that since 2000, knowing that the Northern Branch had the most ridership; the studies were done. And we're still fighting to put that piece of Bergen on that rail for Hudson.

So again, there is so much that we need to do, and it's about prioritizing the funding, and finding out -- or at least have transparency for the continued toll hikes: where those monies are going. And hopefully they're being spent productively for what we need for infrastructure.

So thank you again for holding this hearing.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

At this point, I'd like to call Mayor Rose Heck of Hasbrouck Heights, and former Assemblywoman from the 38th District of Bergen County.

**MAYOR ROSE MARIE HECK:** Thank you very much, Senator.

**SENATOR GORDON:** Mayor.

**MAYOR HECK:** I'm very happy to be here.

**SENATOR GORDON:** We're glad to have you here.

**MAYOR HECK:** I do have one comment, though. We did not get notice of this meeting until after 4 o'clock yesterday -- otherwise, you would have seen a lot more people here.

**SENATOR GORDON:** I--

**MAYOR HECK:** That's okay; I'm thanking you for sending it, because we would not have known.

**SENATOR GORDON:** I will tell you that I got a -- I saw an e-mail today from another Mayor in my District with similar comments. I think it was really kind of a last-minute decision that, "Gee, whiz, we're going to be-- We're not holding a hearing in Trenton; we're actually going to be in our home county."

**MAYOR HECK:** Right.

**SENATOR GORDON:** "Let's let all our mayors know."

**MAYOR HECK:** We have two mayors here today.

**SENATOR GORDON:** So I apologize for that. I think we've learned a lesson--

**MAYOR HECK:** I'm just thankful that you did let us know.

**SENATOR GORDON:** Yes.

MAYOR HECK: I'm just noting, please, when you come to Bergen, give us sufficient time. But not only for the mayors, but the council members who wanted to come today.

SENATOR GORDON: Right.

MAYOR HECK: Because we represent the people; we represent the ridership. Senator Sarlo mentioned before that we can see people just standing, and waiting, and waiting. And we fight when buses just keep passing those people by, and they have been there a half-hour, an hour, waiting for the bus, in all kinds of weather. We do need a new terminal, no doubt about it. We do need transparency -- and thank you, Loretta, for all your work in that behalf. It is a little aggravating, on the local level sometimes, but it is needed.

And the fact that they spent -- the Port Authority spent so much time on real estate matters instead of their initial mission is really disheartening, and we're not satisfied with them at all. No matter who the problem is, whether it's New York or New Jersey, it must be resolved -- must be. They must spend their money more wisely, and certainly allow us -- again, in this bill, I haven't had a chance to digest it or review it at length -- but more transparency on the way they spend money, particularly in the real estate area.

Senator Sarlo was right; they have great engineers, really marvelous people who can help and who are not being heard at the Port Authority.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Rose, if I may, just in terms of this bill.

MAYOR HECK: Yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So that you're aware-- I mean, it's--

SENATOR GORDON: We're getting you a copy of the bill right now.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --long, and it's--

MAYOR HECK: Yes, I understand.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --complex, of course -- but not so complex.

But one of the things -- I think one of the most important things that we require in this bill is this 90- to 120-day information, from the Port Authority to the legislatures of both states, so that the legislative transportation committees -- whoever -- can have public hearings for their mayors, and their councils, and their constituents on what is in the capital plan.

MAYOR HECK: Agreed.

SENATOR WEINBERG: And it gives the legislature not power over them, but enough public scheduling so that the legislature can take that plan and present it to you.

MAYOR HECK: It is my understanding that your-- In the bill-- I'm not sure; you mentioned before that you would have representatives from both transportation commissions--

SENATOR GORDON: Departments.

MAYOR HECK: -- on this particular body to look at all of--

SENATOR GORDON: But you know what? What we're trying to do here--

MAYOR HECK: But my question is: Who gets to appoint those people? Would the legislative body have some input, or would there just be a governor -- whoever is sitting?

SENATOR GORDON: What we're trying to do with this is -- we're concerned that even though we've got six Commissioners from New York and six Commissioners and New Jersey, who are presumably representing their respective states' interests at the highest levels of the organization-- As you know, anyone who has been in government knows that there is some very critical decisions that are made at lower levels in the organization. Now, which options get kicked upstairs, for example? And while the Governors would retain their veto powers over the minutes, we're concerned that someone needs to be representing each state at the, sort of, mid-level of the organization, saying, "New Jersey is really concerned about this particular subject. There's no way we want a bus terminal in New Jersey because that means another stop for a New Jersey commuter, as opposed to a one-seat ride. So let's not even talk about that."

And this person would also be reporting back to their respective departments of transportation, and presumably it would go on to the Governors' offices from there. These people would be appointed by -- would be, we hope, transportation professionals, not political people -- appointed by the two Commissioners of Transportation, and are really meant to be people who understand the nuances of transportation policy.

MAYOR HECK: You know, we see people sitting in boards, and transportation boards, who have no knowledge of transportation--

SENATOR GORDON: I know.

MAYOR HECK: --which is very disconcerting.

And we hope that Westmont becomes a reality there; we're waiting.

SENATOR SARLO: I will tell you this: You gave me an opening there. One of the few towns in the state that got a train station done in the last 10 years.

MAYOR HECK: That's right.

SENATOR SARLO: And by the way, we did it with a lot of people's help. But what really got it done-- It's all private money, being financed through the community. We had to get DCA approval; the town floated the bonds, they're paying us back; it's on the map. That train station will be open sometime in January.

MAYOR HECK: I'm very pleased.

SENATOR SARLO: As the County Exec, you'll be able to be there for the ribbon-cutting, but it's one of the few train stations that has opened in the last 10 years.

MAYOR HECK: Right.

SENATOR WEINBERG: I want to congratulate you, Senator Sarlo. But on behalf of the constituents I represent, you need a rail line in order to build a train station -- and we don't have one. (laughter)

SENATOR SARLO: I agree.

MAYOR HECK: Again, as Assemblywoman Huttle--

SENATOR SARLO: And we actually serve-- I don't want to interrupt you, but we actually serve-- When I came in the Assembly, we took testimony -- yourself and Assemblyman Doria, I was a new Assemblyman -- and we went to Bayonne, Jersey City. We took testimony through a bunch of different communities of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail.

And I remember it was a small little committee that was put together by then-Speaker Sires, I guess, at the time. And we were on the same committee on that.

MAYOR HECK: Yes, we were. But I will tell you that we're frustrated in Bergen at having given Hudson the leeway to start first, so that we would have a destination. And then we were supposed to be up and running in 2004. It's 2015; nothing is being done to my satisfaction. And the NJTPA, headed by a Hudson County Executive, is not giving us the go-ahead for the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail -- but has passed resolutions to see an extension for 440 in Jersey City. We have to have people in Bergen start standing up for the people in Bergen County. Again, Senator -- both Senators -- well, all three of you are from Bergen -- you know our population is heavy; you know that Hudson County was estimated to have a ridership of 15,000 a day on the Light Rail; it's up to 45,000.

Again, as you said, Senator Gordon, taking cars off the road, moving people -- exponentially, it's beautiful. We have an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 for Bergen County -- which would be tripled to 90,000 a day -- and we're just waiting.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Let me bring you up-to-date, if you're not up-to-date.

There is a new DEIS study being done by New Jersey Transit--

MAYOR HECK: I do know.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --because Tenafly decided, in its infinite wisdom, that it didn't want the Light Rail going through Tenafly.

MAYOR HECK: Correct; I'm aware of all of that.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So there is a new destination -- which is Englewood -- and a private-public partnership with Englewood Hospital, that is building -- will be building a garage for park-and-ride there.

MAYOR HECK: Correct. I do know that.

Senator, may I interject--

SENATOR WEINBERG: And let me just add -- because you have three Bergen Senators here --

MAYOR HECK: Yes, please.

SENATOR WEINBERG: We have lobbied, with our Senate President, and we have gotten a commitment that when we get the TTF re-funded, and we get our bond issues, there will be no movement forward without the Bergen portion of the Bergen-Hudson line.

MAYOR HECK: Excellent.

SENATOR WEINBERG: And the Senate President has made that commitment to all three of us. And believe me, if I can't hold his feet to the fire, I'll call on you, Rose, and together-- (laughter)

MAYOR HECK: You call me, too, because he did tell me that last year, as we opened the Center for Hope and Safety. Senator Sweeney -- our Senate President Sweeney promised me that he would be doing that.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, and he is going to.

MAYOR HECK: And you know, I'm the New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers' Chairman of the Light Rail Panel, and have been keeping this alive for many years. So I do know what's going on.

SENATOR WEINBERG: If all else fails--

MAYOR HECK: We're trying also to get a station, Senator Sarlo, at Teterboro Heights on Williams Avenue. Do you think they're

paying attention to us? They built a giant Wal-Mart, a giant Costco, putting more cars on the road. We have one ray of sunshine: A bus is going to go there; but we have a train that could go there. We have the opportunity to have a private person help fund that -- put up a kind of a Dunkin' Donuts-type thing and pay for it -- and Transit refused. This was a number of years ago; not the present Director.

But we have stupidity going on in the transportation area.

SENATOR GORDON: I've heard that.

MAYOR HECK: We have a lot of that going on, and I testified to that. And I am hoping that, on behalf of the public -- on the ridership -- that you will take positive and quick action.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you.

And let me, please, thank you for your advocacy. Slightly off-point -- Rose Heck was the Chairperson of the Women, Family, Children Advisory Committee -- a precursor in the Legislature to real Committees of the Legislature. And it was with Rose's leadership, and I was a proud participant. Probably the thing-- If I had to pick a piece of legislation of which I am most proud, it is the 48 hours for new moms and their babies--

MAYOR HECK: Don't tell them how you got everybody to listen. (laughter)

SENATOR WEINBERG: Rose, that's one of my favorite on-the-road stories, and I will save it for the appropriate occasion.

MAYOR HECK: Okay.

SENATOR WEINBERG: But thank you for your advocacy on behalf of not only the basics like transportation, but how we take care of our new moms and their babies.

MAYOR HECK: It's my pleasure; it's a joy to me.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you.

MAYOR HECK: And don't forget the Audrey Hepburn Children's House for -- iagnostic and treatment centers of abused and neglected children. And we have four of them in the state.

SENATOR WEINBERG: That's right; right here in Hackensack.

MAYOR HECK: But thank you very much for holding the hearing.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

MAYOR HECK: My only suggestion -- please give us more time.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay; I've learned my lesson.

MAYOR HECK: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

Freeholder Tracy Zur, of Bergen County, is in the audience.

Freeholder Zur.

**F R E E H O L D E R T R A C Y S I L N A Z U R:** Like it's been said -- it feels weird being on this side.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes. (laughter)

FREEHOLDER ZUR: First of all, I want to thank all of you for having this hearing here and giving us an opportunity to vocalize our concerns and bring them to your attention.

I applaud what you're doing, as far as this Port Authority reform legislation. I was on this Board when we dealt with the effects of Bridgegate, and I was there as we could not fathom how this could occur. I am all for the independence of independent authorities; I understand that the development that they do is vital. But that doesn't mean that it has to happen in secrecy; that doesn't mean that it has to happen in darkness. To quote Louis Brandeis, "Sunlight is the best disinfectant," and the only way that we're going to be able to make sure-- And echoing what has been said before, the only way that we're going to be able to make sure that the Port Authority stays on mission and stays focusing on its core purpose is to have that level of transparency and is to have that kind of accountability.

And staying on its core mission -- there's a lot to do on transportation. Our County Executive very passionately laid out so many of the challenges that we're facing here in Bergen County. You know, it is-- In addition to the infrastructure bottlenecks and the challenges we have getting people into Manhattan, we need to figure out ways of getting people around this County, not just out of it. We need to make sure that we're providing services for those with disabilities and our seniors, and to better transport them from point to point in New Jersey, and into the City as well.

The Bergen-Hudson Light Rail -- I don't want to see it just be a field of dreams. If we build it, they will come. They will utilize it, and this will open up doors throughout our County.

You know, one of the questions that I get asked most -- after, "What is a Freeholder?" (laughter) -- the second-most common question that I get asked is, "What are we doing to attract and retain businesses in Bergen County?" And Senator, you hit the nail right on the head. If we

cannot get people around this County, if we cannot improve our infrastructure, we are losing out on business opportunities. If we are not able to transport people into Manhattan, then we are not going to be the bedroom communities -- and then there is that trickle-down effect. If we can't get our commuters into Manhattan, then we're not going to be able to have other businesses that support those who are living here.

So I encourage this dialogue. This is incredible, and I want to be part of it as the Chair of the Transportation Committee of the Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders. And I am thrilled that we are going to be trying to get this agency back on track -- back to focusing on what it should be, which is transportation and dealing with transportation.

So thank you very much for listening. I don't want to be redundant with what the County Executive very eloquently put forward, but these are tremendous concerns that all of our residents. I sat with Senator Weinberg at one of the hearings that she had with commuters, listening to their concerns, listening to the deplorable conditions of the bus station, listening about the very slow repairs that are taking place at the George Washington Bridge station.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, I'm glad you mentioned that.

FREEHOLDER ZUR: And the safety concerns that are going on there. These are the things that should be at the forefront of the mind of the Port Authority. These are the challenges that we need to be tackling. And we can tackle them together.

Yes, as the Professor pointed out, with more regional planning we'll definitely be invaluable to that process. But the Port Authority, as a bi-state commission, should be part and parcel of that regional planning.

And we need the Port Authority to be responsive. So as you hear tonight from the commuters who are going to be before you, I encourage you to listen -- listen to them, listen to their stories. Because that's the direction Port Authority needs to be moving in, and that's the service that it could be providing.

So thank you, Senators, for providing this reform legislation. It's vitally important, and there's a lot more that we need to be doing together.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

Senator.

SENATOR WEINBERG: I'm glad that Freeholder Zur brought that up. They are redoing the uptown George Washington Bridge bus terminal. But as we heard at our last bus forum, it is way overdue and has some real challenges right now -- particularly to accommodate disabled people who have to get in and out. So hopefully we will call their attention to the -- well, their attention was called to it by the residents who came to that bus forum.

FREEHOLDER ZUR: Right.

SENATOR WEINBERG: But it's way, way overdue and lacking. But at least they are updating it, or upgrading it, or whatever.

So certainly as the Chairperson of the Freeholder Transportation Committee-- I hope, again, on a bipartisan basis -- and I hope that Senator Kean will join us -- that we ask for a meeting directly with this Committee and those of you who would like to participate -- certainly, our County Executive and you, Freeholder Zur -- with the Port

Authority Commissioners, at a table, where we can personally, one-on-one-- Although we've tried it at their public meetings; the one-on-one to really present our case and get responses.

So thank you for everything you do, and thank you for being here.

FREEHOLDER ZUR: Thank you, Senator.

Thank you, Senators.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you, Freeholder.

Next, we're going to hear from David Gallagher of the Port Authority Retired Employees Association. Mr. Gallagher represents a group of people who have spent probably decades--

DAVID J. GALLAGHER: Centuries. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: --working for the Port Authority; they know it intimately.

I should tell you that, through Jack Savage, a member of this group, and Mr. Gallagher -- I know I've sought some input and reaction to the drafts of legislation that have been developed, because they have the knowledge of the organization that none of us up here has. And I want to thank you publicly for your participation in that process.

I also want to say that the representatives from the Amalgamated Transit Union -- you're on deck. (laughter) You hang in there; you'll be up next.

Mr. Gallagher.

MR. GALLAGHER: Thank you, Senator, ladies and gentlemen. Good afternoon.

I am pleased to be invited here today to discuss the legislative proposals for the Port Authority reform bill. I'm a retiree, as Senator Gordon has said; I spent 33 years with the Port Authority in a variety of positions, including Human Resources; Engineering; and Tunnels, Bridges, and Terminals -- the very Department that had the problem several years ago.

I served as the Assistant Director when I retired -- Assistant Director in charge of all the non-field activities of the Department. That included finance, project engineering and planning, real estate leases at the bus terminal, and customer information. In addition, I concurrently, at the same time, served as the Project Director for the E-ZPass program during its final testing and implementation stage before it went live across the Port Authority facilities.

The events that have occurred at the Port Authority over these past several years have been most disheartening, and they fly in the face of long-standing Port Authority policy and bylaws. As a Port Authority retiree, I share your frustration and your anger at the actions that were taken by some individuals. They do not reflect the Port Authority that I knew over more than three decades of service there. I wholeheartedly agree that there is a need for some change and, indeed, I'm happy to see that a number of positive changes have already taken hold -- as has been mentioned already.

I have followed the media reports from the very outset of the revelations regarding Bridgegate, and the various other issues which have surfaced as well. For me, and for many of my retiree colleagues and current staff -- although I speak today with you as an individual; I'm not

representing a particular group, but I speak as an individual -- these actions are shocking and jaw-dropping, to say the least. I am very pleased that there has been a good deal of scrutiny in these past months in an effort to address these problems in an appropriate way. And I appreciate the opportunity to share my views on the proposed legislation and to discuss these matters with you today. I fully support the effort to get it right.

So as I have followed the reports over these many months, and I have listened to the epithets being hurled at the Port Authority, and then as I read through the bill, I continue to ask myself, "What exactly went wrong? What are the specific problems that are needed to be solved?"

We certainly are all very aware of the circumstances and the particular actions that have caused so much of this controversy. But I ask myself, "What is the underlying root cause?" and, "To what extent does this legislation address that?" In each case, the genesis -- the initiation of these highly questionable actions comes back to individuals assigned or appointed to the Port Authority from outside. None of the actions were the work of the Port Authority's career professionals, as Senator Weinberg kind of indicated earlier. All of it was undertaken by those whose allegiance was directed to others, but not to the Port Authority or to the region.

So I ask myself, and I ask you, "Does this bill address these key problems?"

It includes certain elements that are absolutely critical: improving the organization's transparency; requiring more disclosure of its actions; protecting whistleblowers; clearly delineating the role, and responsibility, and the allegiance of the Port Authority Commissioners; having the CEO be selected by the Port Authority Board, and not by the

Governor; and finally, restating or clarifying the mission of the Port Authority makes all the sense in the world -- given the prevailing conditions. The proposed bill seems to address those items very well.

But just a quick aside for a moment, regarding transparency and openness. I find it to be more than ironic -- perhaps even inexplicable, when people are pounding the table demanding transparency from the Port Authority -- that the New York bill currently being considered for amendment here today was essentially developed behind the scenes and passed with no public meeting, no public input, no public discussion. It seems to have been done with no transparency whatsoever. As it stands, it is hardly the model of a transparent legislation or public policy process, so I applaud your efforts in these hearings.

I mentioned earlier that these events occurred at the Port Authority. But I reemphasize: They were neither undertaken nor initiated by the Port Authority professional career staff. In each case, these actions were taken by political appointees -- patronage appointees, whose allegiance and behavior were demonstrably not in support of the Port Authority or the region; but rather were directed to serve their patron, on the one hand, or they were taken to promote their own self-interests. The notion of acting for the benefit of the public or the region was far from their agenda.

And therein lies the root cause of these recent problems. It goes directly to those who are not PA career people, and these actions were undertaken in brazen defiance of the Port Authority's long-standing policies, operating procedures, and bylaws.

In my view, the root causes fall into several categories. First, the inappropriate and politically driven interference in the PA's activities

and priorities. This interference was designed specifically to promote a partisan, political agenda as opposed to meeting this region's needs.

Second, more than 70 patronage appointees were spread throughout the ranks of the PA staff to serve as eyes and ears for their political leaders and their allies. These individuals were not selected in accordance with Port Authority's traditional recruitment practices, or because of their particular expertise, or because there was a particular vacancy in the staffing ranks. They were simply directed to be appointed. These actions were, and are, absolutely wrong. They were counterproductive and divisive.

These two factors have gone a long way to tarnish the organization's reputation and they have impeded the ongoing efforts of the Port Authority to serve this region.

The presence of those patronage appointees served to create an environment riddled with dysfunction, suspicion, fear, and intimidation. The remnants persist among the staff even to today. This is most unfortunate in view of the long-term challenges facing the Port Authority as it works to modernize the airports; maintain safe bridges, and tunnels, Port facilities and terminals; and execute a myriad of other essential tasks -- including those that you have mentioned today about the Bus Terminal, the rail tunnel, and others. It is a tribute to the current PA staff that they remain committed to fulfilling their role of public service with professionalism and dedication despite these politically motivated intrusions.

Fortunately, from what I can tell, the current Chairman, John Degnan, has exercised outstanding leadership over these past 15 months in

his effort to lead the Board, and to reenergize the organization and restore the public trust in the midst of a number of complex and controversial policy issues -- many of which you've talked about earlier today and in previous hearings. This is no easy task after all that has happened and all the derogatory comments about the Port Authority over these past months. From all reports, his calm demeanor, his sense of reason, and his political independence have been exemplary at this critical juncture in the Port Authority's history.

I'm fully aware of the proposed provision in the bill which calls for rotating the Chair and the Vice Chair from one state to the other every two years, beginning one year from the effective date of this bill. This proposal has merit. And I support the waiting period as a way to provide this Chairman with sufficient time and space to continue the effort to get things right.

I've had an opportunity to read the proposed bill with the recommended amendments. My general comments fall into three broad categories: First, it would seem that legislation ought to be directed mainly toward establishing key public policy requirements. I mentioned some of them earlier. But in this bill, there are a myriad of basic management practices which would now become a matter of legislative mandate. Many of these requirements -- such as issuing an annual report, or a capital plan -- are already part and parcel of the Port Authority's management practices, and this has been the case for decades. These are readily available on the Port Authority's website. To require these practices and others to be a legal mandate strikes me as being superfluous and essentially results in legislating a structure of inflexibility. What happens when circumstances change, or

when other options develop in the future? Apparently, new legislation in two states will be required. Is there really a desire for that? It's been a tortuous process already just to get to this point.

Second, I disagree -- despite the comments earlier, I disagree with the effort to have the Port Authority be subject to direct legislative involvement as a matter of law, or to have a liaison person from each state assigned to the Port Authority staff -- again, as a matter of law. To me, this is a clear case of political overreach and it flies in the face of long-standing provisions of the Port Compact and the historical precedent.

As I see it, it is counterproductive and can only add to an environment of dysfunction and distrust. It provides even a greater opportunity for exerting political favoritism -- this time, from hundreds of legislators in two states. I think it is a grave mistake, and I hope these provisions will be deleted from the bill. But I support the efforts that have been discussed to have cooperative, collaborative discussion. Please don't misunderstand my position on that.

I completely understand your desire to have the legislators be more involved; and I know it has been particularly frustrating in your dealings with the Executive Branch. But those frustrations ought not be resolved by redefining the historical relationship of the Port Authority with the two states. There are several other avenues to pursue that goal. If you, as legislators, have been thwarted in exercising your check-and-balance function with the Executive Branch, as a citizen I say that that's a problem for you to solve with the Executive Branch, but not by way of hamstringing the Port Authority's professional staff.

I'm sure this frustration is not limited to issues of the Port Authority alone; it seems to pervade the governance of the State more broadly. I urge you not to take out your frustration on the Port Authority when the core problem for the actions that were taken lies elsewhere.

Third, this goes back to my earlier comment about the root cause of these problems. As I mentioned earlier, to me the root cause is the inappropriate involvement of political outsiders -- Senator Kean mentioned that eloquently just a little while ago -- and the imposition of patronage appointees into the ranks of the organization. But I see nothing in this bill that addresses that in any way whatsoever.

While I completely understand the anger and the lashing out, I think the growling and the trash talk has been directed -- or misdirected broadly at the Port Authority, including its staff, rather than at the source of these inappropriate actions.

If this bill is passed, what will prevent the continuation of patronage largess? What will prevent the directives from outside the organizations which are not in the interests of the Port Authority, but are designed to have local parochial interests?

There is no question in my mind that patronage appointments should be halted completely, once and for all. All recruiting and hiring, below the position of Executive Director or CEO, should be accomplished through the normal Human Resource policies and procedures employed by the Port Authority staff. That's clear. Is legislation required to accomplish that?

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: Each Governor has the right to nominate six individuals to serve on the PA Board, and they can only serve once they are approved by the Legislature -- for better or for worse. Is a bill needed to strengthen that legislative responsibility in order to assure a more effective outcome?

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: In addition, a key point: Any policy directive from outside the organization that is not consistent with the proper role, responsibility, and policies of the Port Authority must be resisted by the PA Board. This is a crucial, intrinsic element of their role. It is their fundamental responsibility to act on behalf of the organization and its regional purpose -- but not as servants of the governor of one state or the other. They need to stand firm and resist improper requests or directives. Is legislation needed to assure that?

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: That is the basis for PA being an independent organization -- independent from partisan, political agendas. The Board definitely needs to work with elected officials and business leaders in the ongoing efforts to meet the regional and public interests. Unfortunately, throughout this ordeal and prior to Chairman Degnan's appointment, their silence has been deafening, and their apparent subservience has been both disappointing and disheartening.

Finally, in the absence of context, it is not clear why some of the provisions -- for example, on subsidiaries or lobbyists -- are even included in the bill, so it is difficult to comment on them specifically, except to say that they, too, seem to be superfluous and will undoubtedly add to

the PA's bureaucratic workload. In addition, it is not clear just how this bill impacts existing provisions as reflected in the documents like the Port Compact, or the PA Bylaws -- which, by the way, are all available on the PA website, and I'm sure you've read them -- or other laws which apply to the Port Authority. Again, many of the items are already a matter of ongoing and longstanding practice of the PA, so it is hard to understand the need for legislating them. It would seem to me that the goal of having these practices to be in effect has, in fact, already been accomplished in great measure. For me, I encourage more continued and constructive vigilance and less legislation.

In conclusion, I support the efforts to get it right. Those efforts require a clear description or definition of the problem to be solved, and an objective focus and assessment of the underlying causes. The solution, in the form of legislation, needs to clearly address those underlying causes; otherwise the effort misses the target and basically serves as window dressing for the public, while allowing for the continuation of the very actions that contributed to these problems in the first place. In the future, others may still be allowed to misuse the Port Authority to meet their own, short-term political agendas.

In the final analysis, the Port Authority Board -- each members' qualifications and commitment to the Port Authority having been reviewed and approved by the Legislature, together with the senior leaders of the agency -- needs to be able to live with the mandates of this bill and still be able to apply top-level professionalism and political independence in executing their regional mission. I would hope they have been an integral part of the process for developing these requirements in the legislation.

I've offered some observations and concerns, based on my experiences over more than three decades. But it is they, the current and future leaders, who must carry on the PA's mission in today's world. And in my view, they need to do so with your support and your collaboration -- not retribution, retaliation, and punishment; with professionalism, not bureaucracy; with a regional perspective, not with political parochialism. If this bill -- whatever form it takes -- can do that, then I think it may be fair to say that you've gotten it right.

I look forward to continuing the discussion. Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much, Mr. Gallagher.

I think we all appreciate how much time and thought you put into the analysis you presented, and we certainly are very appreciative of that. There are so many things I'd like to say in reaction to your comments.

First, something that I agree has been lost in the discussion -- in the press coverage. And that is that this -- that many of these problems are what I would call *people problems* emanating from the politicians -- not from the professionals who populate--

SENATOR WEINBERG: I disagree with that.

SENATOR GORDON: Well, you're allowed to do that.

MR. GALLAGHER: It doesn't come across that way in the press, however.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes. The Port Authority has done just some phenomenal things over its 90-plus years. I think many of the problems are caused relatively recently because of the patronage appointments and the politicization of the Port Authority -- which did not begin in the current Administration.

On the other hand, in anticipation of something that Senator Weinberg will say (laughter)--

MR. GALLAGHER: She is waiting to say it.

SENATOR SARLO: She's just waiting.

SENATOR GORDON: You know, this departure from the original mission, the gravitation to real estate and economic development -- that, I don't believe, emanated from the professionals in the organization; it was probably directed by the Board members from the top down. And those people were doing the business of the governors who appointed them, and the people who surround those governors.

MR. GALLAGHER: Just to help me out, Senator. Beyond the Trade Center, what other -- I'm just curious: What other things come to mind that are outside of the Port Authority's mission? I'm just curious

SENATOR GORDON: Well, certainly, the Trade Center is--

MR. GALLAGHER: Which was, basically, politically driven.

SENATOR GORDON: I understand it was a deal with PATH to--

MR. GALLAGHER: I mean, the Governors, the Mayor of New York--

SENATOR GORDON: Right. Governor Hughes, and--

MR. GALLAGHER: --Bloomberg, and Giuliani, and all mandated that. But I'm just curious about what other--

SENATOR GORDON: But we're seeing a continuation of it, with a third of the capital budget going into--

MR. GALLAGHER: Well, once the commitment was made, I guess the commitment has to be followed through.

SENATOR GORDON: It's a lot of marble, though, in that.

MR. GALLAGHER: Oh, it's a lot of marble; there's no question about that.

SENATOR GORDON: There's a lot of marble.

MR. GALLAGHER: I agree with you 100 percent on that, Senator.

SENATOR GORDON: But I mean, what one hears about -- and these certainly don't rise to the same level of magnitude, but one hears about investments in estuary protection in Monmouth County, and investments in the Museum of Modern Art, and things that are clearly outside the--

MR. GALLAGHER: And that are relatively small, small--

SENATOR GORDON: But they are relatively small; I said they didn't rise to the same level of magnitude.

But when-- You know, there are other economic developments projects in the Brooklyn waterfront; and the buildings -- what is the riverfront-- There is a building that the Port Authority constructed in Newark -- downtown Newark--

MR. GALLAGHER: The Legal Center.

SENATOR GORDON: --which houses the Legal Center. I'm sure Senator Weinberg has a list of these.

MR. GALLAGHER: But if you think about the Port Authority -- And I understand the concern about "real estate." The Port Authority basically is a real estate holding organization. It is a landlord. It doesn't run the transportation -- it doesn't run aircraft, it doesn't run the buses, it

doesn't run-- The only thing it operates, really, from a transportation point of view, is the PATH system, basically--

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: --which is a multi-hundred-million-dollar-a-year loss operation.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: So the Port Authority, in many respects, could be viewed as a real estate holding landlord.

SENATOR GORDON: Interesting point.

MR. GALLAGHER: And that's what it is. The airports are all landlord; Port Newark, Port Elizabeth is landlord.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: So I understand the concern about the Trade Center; I understand that. And the--

SENATOR GORDON: I think we're less concerned about real estate investments that are transportation-related. We understand terminals at an airport; marine facilities--

MR. GALLAGHER: Even the Bus Terminal.

SENATOR GORDON: And Bus Terminal.

With regard to your comment about these legislative mandates, I think there's a concern on our part that items that are in bylaws or in procedures can be changed with one vote of a group of people in a board meeting; and that without the force of law, changes can be made that we feel would not be in the interest of the agency or its mission.

MR. GALLAGHER: I understand that, and changes could happen. Vigilance takes care of that, in many respects. But the bylaws, as

they are written -- if you look at the bylaws as they are currently written-- Assemblywoman Huttle mentioned the toll increase before. The bylaws called for a specific procedure to be done when a Port Authority toll increase is recommended. That procedure was ignored.

SENATOR GORDON: Again -- a people problem, I think.

MR. GALLAGHER: What's that?

SENATOR GORDON: Again -- a people problem.

MR. GALLAGHER: But that's a major-- But that is the problem. It wasn't a problem of the absence of policy; it wasn't a problem of the failure to think about this and to create a hearing process -- legitimate, at different times of the day, different accessible points of view. It was ignored; it was ignored. And that's wrong.

SENATOR GORDON: There are some things that we have limited ability to change, as Legislators. You know, if a certain individual gets elected governor of either state, he or she will appoint people who can either be the kind of people we saw in the earlier periods of the Port Authority history when -- one reads about a group of people meeting with Governor Dewey, who stood up to power, and said, "Governor, your ideas about the airports are wrong; here's why," and got him to change his views. I'm not sure we have those kinds of people sitting on the Port Authority.

MR. GALLAGHER: That's a different problem; I hear you.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes, and that's a problem we can't legislate.

MR. GALLAGHER: I hear you.

SENATOR GORDON: That's up to the voters.

MR. GALLAGHER: You can't legislate that.

SENATOR GORDON: I am very interested in your thoughts about this liaison mechanism that we created. We have this concern that, given the provisions of the bill that emerged from the three guys in a room in June, that there's a shift in power to New York. We're just looking for some parity of influence. And we want to change that structure; if we can't, we're looking for other mechanisms that try to offset it. And that was the idea behind the liaisons. You know, that is an idea that I certainly have that is not cast in stone, if there's a better way of doing it. It was an idea that I -- at least it was my interpretation of a suggestion made by Jim Doig who said that something like that had been done in the past--

MR. GALLAGHER: Well, it had been; and I can describe what it basically was.

There was a Port Authority staff member who was basically assigned to work, and coordinate, and cooperate with Trenton. And another Port Authority staff member who was to work and coordinate with Albany. And they were--

SENATOR GORDON: I think I knew one of them during the Kean years, actually.

MR. GALLAGHER: Jim Kennelly. Did you know Jim Kennelly?

SENATOR GORDON: Chuck--

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes; I can't think of his last name. Chuck -- I know who you mean. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: And I think that's the idea behind the legislative oversight. If we can't exert the decision-making power, perhaps

we can have a mechanism for focusing attention on an issue the way Senator Weinberg did with her Bus Terminal hearing.

MR. GALLAGHER: I think what Senator Weinberg did was absolutely outstanding -- by going and pounding on a table about that Bridgegate situation; no question.

SENATOR GORDON: And not just that, but just the condition of the terminal, and the way we--

MR. GALLAGHER: Absolutely, absolutely. But that's not oversight; that's advocacy.

SENATOR GORDON: Well--

MR. GALLAGHER: And I think advocacy is a very-- No question.

SENATOR GORDON: We do have an interest in genuine oversight, and we've had, actually, some hearings that I think are of the kind that we would like to see in which a Chairman of the Port Authority, accompanied by senior staff, comes before a Committee and says, "Here's what we've been doing over the last six months; here are our plans for the next six months; and we'll take any questions." And my hope is -- our hope is that we will develop expertise in Trenton, and the Office of Legislative Services -- and I think we probably have that expertise now -- from people who will follow the Port Authority intimately and know what's going on, and will say, "Here are some questions you should ask them: Why are they investing in this? Why--" "Explain this flight to Columbia, South Carolina, for me" -- things like that, so that there is--

MR. GALLAGHER: Another aberration, by the way.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes, of course.

MR. GALLAGHER: Another people problem.

SENATOR GORDON: But just if there is a knowledge in the organization that -- someone may ask a question about this in a very public setting. I don't think we should go near this. Just to create that kind of check on the organization I think would be a healthy thing.

Some of these people problems get back to what I think has been a failing on the part of the Senate, in really not -- at least in year's past, I don't think it will happen in the near future -- I don't think we paid enough attention to the people who were being nominated to the Board of Commissioners; or we didn't ask the tough questions that we should have. I certainly was guilty of that.

MR. GALLAGHER: Or get the commitment to the position. That's key.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes, certainly I will never interview a nominee to the Port Authority again with the same attitude, I can assure you.

MR. GALLAGHER: Lessons learned, I guess, from everybody.

SENATOR GORDON: With regard to your comments about the subsidy -- of the subsidiaries and lobbyists -- some of these provisions came over from the New York authorities legislation--

MR. GALLAGHER: I mean, there is a whole-- For example, there is a whole provision of subsidiary -- of organizing a subsidiary now. I mean, it doesn't get just created--

SENATOR GORDON: Some of these things are very, very negotiable, and we've already had conversations with our New York

counterparts about those things. We really want to focus on the essence that will give us the transparency and the accountability.

MR. GALLAGHER: Agreed; agreed. And it seems to cover it very well.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: And I think that people I had spoken with -- my friends who are retired, as well as some current staff -- the notion of open transparency, whistleblower protection is all in place, basically, right now. But if that's a matter of public policy, I think that's terrific.

SENATOR GORDON: And I can say I'm in the process of reading *The Power Broker*, about Robert Moses.

MR. GALLAGHER: A good book to read.

SENATOR GORDON: These problems are not unique to our era.

MR. GALLAGHER: We are revisiting a 100-year-old problem. We are in the same -- similar conditions today as we were 100 years ago -- just about now. The Port Authority was created in 1921, but the conditions that prompted it existed from the early 1910s -- so we're there, yes, Senator.

SENATOR GORDON: Senator Weinberg.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you.

Mr. Gallagher, first of all, I join in your comments about Chairman Degnan. He has really helped develop a new day there. Without this bill, Chairman Degnan will be gone by December of this year.

MR. GALLAGHER: He has.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Because New York is going to get the Chairman, and that's already been pre-selected. So that's the first thing. There will not be John Degnan there; now, hopefully, there are other Commissioners who might fill the role. I don't have that kind of confidence; and granted, I have certainly not had nearly the professional experience that you have had to understand the bureaucracy there.

But I had a couple of years of, really, in-depth questioning of people there, in terms of the senior management at the Port Authority, very senior management. There were no heroes in this drama.

MR. GALLAGHER: In the drama of Bridgegate?

SENATOR WEINBERG: The drama of Bridgegate.

MR. GALLAGHER: I hear you.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Correct. They were people who came and testified, "I followed orders."

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: "I knew it was wrong, but I followed orders," or, "I didn't follow up on that employee, because he wasn't my employee."

MR. GALLAGHER: I heard that, too.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So that's the very senior management at the Port Authority.

In terms of the Commissioners -- I sit on the Judiciary Committee in the Senate. There is not one Commissioner who has come before me who I didn't question very carefully -- pre-dates Bridgegate, something I never would've thought could have existed.

MR. GALLAGHER: None of us would.

SENATOR WEINBERG: But I knew the impact of the George Washington Bridge on the people I represent. It's located in Fort Lee; we're delighted to have the George Washington Bridge. It's the genesis that created economic development in Bergen County. But I knew the impact, and I questioned every single one of them about the GW Bridge, about transportation on behalf of my constituents -- those who came before me, I questioned. And they all gave me the right answers, with the exception-- I can't speak too clearly on the New York Commissioners, because I don't know which ones were replaced subsequent to-- I know that Governor Cuomo made some new appointments--

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes, he did -- two or three.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --subsequent to Bridgegate. But I can speak about the New Jersey Commissioners, with the exception of Chairman Degnan and Commissioner Laufenberg. Every one of them was there.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: They were there through Bridgegate, they were there through the marble edifice, they were there through all of this. They were there when I went to every Port Authority meeting. And not one of them on the New Jersey side-- I did not see one piece of correspondence in all the subpoenaed documents we had -- not one piece of correspondence from the then-Chairperson, or any member of the Port Authority on the New Jersey side, that said, "Gee, I just read an e-mail from our Executive Director that laws might have been broken. Could we please find out what happened here?" Not one piece of correspondence.

MR. GALLAGHER: And when you went to the meeting, you mean you--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Pardon me, when the Executive Director Pat Foye issued that e-mail reversing the GW Bridge closures -- which was-- I know all these dates by heart -- October 1 in the *Wall Street Journal*.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes, yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Not one piece of correspondence or one anything from any of those Commissioners to say, "Hey, our CEO just suggested that laws might have been broken here. Could we call him in and have a meeting?" Nothing; no questions. In fact, the only interchange that took place was when I was appearing at a subcommittee, the first week of October, I believe, when there was an interchange between the then-Chairman Dave Samson and some of the aforementioned over whether they should allow me to speak or not. That generated a whole lot of correspondence. But not one piece of correspondence--

So you've faith in the way the Port Authority, at the top levels -- both Commissioners and the very senior staff -- have acted over the last couple of years, as much as I have admiration for you and for the professional bureaucracy, and for the people who we're going to hear from next-- I have a Facebook friend, and I am sure you in the union know who he is, what-- I never post anything that he doesn't correct me about, "I'm the one who goes into the tunnel and pulls the cars out when they're on fire or stuck or whatever." So I have faith in all those people; but unless we have a mechanism-- You talk about advocacy. We're talking about years in the future when we won't be here.

MR. GALLAGHER: Or me, either.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Or certainly I won't be here.

MR. GALLAGHER: Me either.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So we can't depend upon advocates. We need the legislative-- It is not political interference; it is merely a way to bring public knowledge to what the capital plan will entail, what they plan to do now or six months from now.

So to me, that's the most important part of the bill. The liaisons -- I think we are open to discussion on how we deal with that -- whether we've incorporated too many things in here; we could certainly be open to discussion. But the legislative oversight is the lynchpin to keep this into the future.

MR. GALLAGHER: I know you feel that way; it's clear.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So I feel so strongly about that.

MR. GALLAGHER: I know.

SENATOR WEINBERG: And it's only based upon the experience I've had. Mr. Gallagher, had there been more Mr. Gallaghers and Jack Savages at the Port Authority during this, there probably would have been less of this.

MR. GALLAGHER: There were a lot of them over the years.

SENATOR WEINBERG: But we heard from the then-Bridges and Tunnels people who were so nervous they all did what they were told to do.

MR. GALLAGHER: They were nervous. And I've spoken with a number of them since.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Right.

MR. GALLAGHER: Not recently, but at the time. And it's hard for me to describe in words what the feelings of that organization were.

SENATOR WEINBERG: We saw it at our Committee meeting.

MR. GALLAGHER: You saw it. When a question was asked, then the manager of the George Washington Bridge just sat there-- I mean, that spoke volumes, that spoke volumes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: That's right. He was overcome with emotion; yes, you're absolutely right.

MR. GALLAGHER: But let me just go back to make sure I understood your comment.

I don't think I said that I support what the Commissioners had been doing. I think I said I was disheartened by their deafening silence. Their role is to speak up. You have e-mail contact with them, phone contact with them. They're not out in never-never land someplace. They should be contacted almost regularly -- individually, if necessary -- to find out what's happening. I don't know if that's a problem; but for them to sit, as they did, or as they had been doing-- I'm looking at it from way out here, okay? (indicates) I'm not there; I'm out in the left field bleachers someplace, watching all of this. It just is disheartening that they are not acting what seems to be in an overt way to help the Port Authority be better. I'll put it that way.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Well, that's why we built into this bill what I think is the most important aspect. And I've said it since the very beginning: That when there are different people sitting here, and

different people sitting out there, and different people sitting as Commissioners on the Port Authority, there will always be this legislative chance to have a public hearing, that the public is informed about, before the Legislature in either New York or New Jersey -- get my bearings right -- to hear from the Port Authority Commissioners, the Chairperson -- whoever that might be two years from now or five years from now -- and senior staff on, "This is what's in our capital plan; this is how we set our priorities, and this is why." You know, I can go along with almost everything else you said. (laughter) But based upon my own personal experience -- and it's not nearly in the same manner as yours has been -- but my experience has been as an advocate for the people of New Jersey and the people, in particular, who I represent in this area. And I can't trust most of the current Commissioners or the very senior staff. Because when Pat Foye, who was the author of the infamous e-mail, was asked, "Well, why didn't you follow thorough with the employee that you--?" "Well, he wasn't my employee." That was his answer.

MR. GALLAGHER: I hear you, I hear you. That was the line down the center of the hall that was created at that time because of those appointees.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, well, that's why I said there are no heroes in this drama.

MR. GALLAGHER: Oh, I hear you loud and clear -- loud and clear.

SENATOR GORDON: Mr. Gallagher, thank you very much. As this process continues, I hope we'll have the--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Do we have your written remarks?

MR. GALLAGHER: I'll leave a copy of them.

SENATOR GORDON: I hope we'll continue to be able to draw on your expertise, and your colleagues' in the Retiree organization.

MR. GALLAGHER: We're in touch all the time.

SENATOR GORDON: He has no qualms about communicating with me.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes, I know.

SENATOR GORDON: But as I said, we really want to be able to draw on that expertise and experience so we get it right.

MR. GALLAGHER: Well, I appreciate the opportunity to do that. And I thank you again for the invitation to come. I realize that my point of view was a little bit different from what yours is, so far, but--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Not most of it; just the major-- Just the legislative oversight.

MR. GALLAGHER: I know, I know. And it's contentious, because there is concern about -- not you sitting here, but who will be following you, and what kinds of information will they want from the Port Authority. Will the parochial interests and preferences be mandated then from multiple legislators, rather than being imposed by two Governors? And there is parity; there really is parity. Senator Kean laid it out very well before: You have two Governors, six Commissioners. That's equal -- that's equal. The fact that the parity hasn't yielded your preferences -- that's a different matter. That's not the absence of parity.

SENATOR WEINBERG: No, it's not that it hasn't yielded my preferences; it hasn't yielded the preferences that would represent the interest of the public that we're here to represent.

MR. GALLAGHER: I understand that, and I understand what you said earlier, Senator, that you're representing your constituents from Bergen County. That's why you were elected; absolutely.

SENATOR WEINBERG: As well as from the state.

SENATOR GORDON: As well as from the state.

MR. GALLAGHER: Well, well -- the position of an elected official, as a Senator or an Assembly person, generally is to represent their constituencies. And to the extent that you can represent the state -- that's terrific. But we're not even representing the state; we're representing the region -- the integrated region, which is not representing the state -- either New York or New Jersey, for that matter. That's why the Port Authority was separated from that, really, is to look at it as a region, an integrated regional issue, right?

SENATOR WEINBERG: You know, very recently, Mr. Gallagher, you asked about the real estate. While we're arguing about whether or not we--

MR. GALLAGHER: Well, we're not arguing; we're just discussing.

SENATOR WEINBERG: No, I don't mean you and me; while we're generally arguing about the Bus Terminal, there was a proposal about a new redevelopment area in front of LaGuardia Airport with retail, and hotels, and whatever.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes, I read that; I don't know the details of that. But I did read it.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So it seems ongoing--

MR. GALLAGHER: I don't know if it's--

SENATOR WEINBERG: --this preoccupation.

MR. GALLAGHER: Well, if you look at the airports--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, about \$400 million; Mark just reminded me.

MR. GALLAGHER: If you look at the airports, there are all kinds of retail stores in the airports.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Well, yes--

MR. GALLAGHER: There are all kinds of--

SENATOR WEINBERG: --that's fine in the airport. You know, I came home -- just an aside -- Sunday night from a little extended weekend trip to Seattle for a family event. And I got in very late -- it was the middle of the night, really -- and I arranged for a car service to pick me up. And it was just a guy who runs his own car service, who told me he just -- and this is not aimed at you -- but he just had to increase the cost of picking somebody up at the airport and bringing them home because his car is getting such wear and tear because of the bad shape our roads are in.

MR. GALLAGHER: You mean in New Jersey, or at the airport? (laughter)

SENATOR WEINBERG: So you know, I'm paying \$5 more to get my trip back because he has to replace his tires more often, or whatever else is caused by the bad repairs.

So I just want to help point out to the public that we're paying for it, one way or another.

MR. GALLAGHER: Absolutely, absolutely.

SENATOR GORDON: And just on that note about real estate -- again, this story that was in the *Wall Street Journal* yesterday.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes, I saw that.

SENATOR GORDON: There was a senior executive of CBRE, the world's largest real estate organization, talking about how this Oculus, this transportation hub, is going to be a show-stopper for New York. It's going to bring retail where we've needed this for some time. And I'm all for economic development and promoting retail developments, but if you're using public funds for it at the same time the ceilings are leaking at the Port Authority Bus Terminal, it raises questions about priorities and where the money should be coming from for that.

MR. GALLAGHER: Well, and where the money will come from in the future.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: I mean, we're raising the Bayonne Bridge and replacing the suspender ropes out here on the George Washington Bridge; you're building a new Goethals Bridge; we're talking about a Bus Terminal. None of what I just said raises any single revenue stream for the Port Authority -- none of it.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes, yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: Costing billions and billions of dollars.

So there is an issue to be considered, from the financing point of view as well, and it's not just-- Everybody would love to build a new Bus Terminal tomorrow. I mean, I don't think anybody at the Port Authority disagrees with that. I don't think you'll find anybody disagreeing with that. But these decisions are tough to make.

SENATOR GORDON: Right.

Anyway, thank you very much for--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you.

SENATOR KEAN: Just quickly on--

SENATOR GORDON: Oh, Senator Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: I apologize for having to skip out for a quick sec.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes, you missed a very good presentation, Senator. (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: I look forward to reading it. I heard it was a great presentation and you will be submitting it for the record. So I appreciate your deftness and everything else.

And excuse me if I missed this. Through you, is that Bus Terminal location, one block away from the current one -- do you think that's really the best place, the most efficiency, everything else?

MR. GALLAGHER: Well, of the available sites, I think it's probably the only one that's available that meets the needs of the commuters. Because I think if you look at it now -- we used to have data about this. Some high percentage -- I'm going to say, 35 to 40 percent, something like that -- used to be, I don't know if it is today -- of the riders who come into the Bus Terminal in the morning walk to where they go. So the idea of creating a situation where there is a second or third trip that's required by 100 percent of the people -- for example, by building it in New Jersey--

SENATOR KEAN: What would the-- The Lautenberg Station, for example, is one proposal which was unrealistic.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes, but that means that 100 percent of the bus riders would have to take a second trip. And the other 60 percent

who takes a second trip now from the Bus Terminal -- they would wind up with three trips. So in the interest of the commuter who comes into the Bus Terminal, or even in the interest of the infrequent rider who comes in on weekends, or comes in to go to a matinee, for example--

SENATOR GORDON: Tourists, or--

SENATOR KEAN: Or a shoulder -- I mean, sort of a shoulder rider -- right.

MR. GALLAGHER: Or the shoulder; exactly. It seems like the 9th Avenue -- 9th to 10th Avenue site would seem to-- I have no idea what the real estate availability is there. You would have to condemn land, I'm assuming; and all of that has to be built into the cost estimates, and so forth. But I would have wished that you could have -- personally, if you could have built along 8th Avenue up toward 42nd Street, up towards -- yes, up towards 42nd to 43rd, to keep it closer to the subways and closer to where people go. Nobody is going, when they get off the bus -- nobody is going to the 9th, 10th, 11th Avenue site. They are all coming to 8th, 7th, 6th, and into Midtown. So to build it up that way-- But I don't know if that's been an actual option; I don't know what the real estate-- I mean, real estate in Manhattan is pricey.

SENATOR KEAN: We've heard that.

MR. GALLAGHER: The other thing that -- just let me piggyback on that for a moment. Because what I haven't heard here yet about the whole Bus Terminal -- and I might as well throw it in, because we're talking about this -- is the notion of the bus parking garage. And that's not a blue-ribbon project. But right now, all the buses, as you know, park in New Jersey. So when the afternoon rush comes, every one of those

buses has to go back through the Lincoln Tunnel and get into the Bus Terminal.

SENATOR WEINBERG: And they pay tolls.

MR. GALLAGHER: And they pay tolls. And, by the way, they -- well, I won't say.

But the notion of having the buses there, right next to the Bus Terminal where they can be called on an as-needed basis, is no small matter. It really would help the operating efficiency of the Bus Terminal to have those buses readily available.

Now, I know that that's part of the thinking, and I'm not really sure -- you may know -- I'm not really sure that the new Bus Terminal "\$10 billion" figure includes a bus parking garage. It may; I'm just not certain, for myself.

SENATOR KEAN: Okay. And that--

MR. GALLAGHER: But that's a key element.

SENATOR KEAN: Okay, right. And I think that you're right -- that staging capacity is--

MR. GALLAGHER: Absolutely.

SENATOR KEAN: It unclogs roadways, creates efficiencies, and it creates a demand response, basically.

MR. GALLAGHER: That -- and it unclogs the Lincoln Tunnel. You get one glitch in the Lincoln Tunnel, coming or going, and it backs up right into the Bus Terminal.

SENATOR KEAN: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: Backs right up into the Bus Terminal; there is no question about that. It's an integrated system, basically.

SENATOR KEAN: Right, right. And so-- Okay, because that's important. I appreciate your insights on that front.

And again, to your point -- because this is an issue where-- New Jersey commuters, whether they're going by bus or by rail-- I mean, the fact that we are the ones who are even contemplating the two-, three-, or four-seat ride in a context that others aren't contemplating, to me is something that the Port Authority, on a bi-state basis, needs to keep in the forefront of its mind. I mean, Commissioners like--

MR. GALLAGHER: It should be a one-seat ride.

SENATOR KEAN: It should be a one-seat ride. Listen, I'm a Raritan Valley Line person, and so even the buses, the rail -- what have you -- we're doing everything we can to make sure we get off the shoulders; and making sure individuals, whether rail or by bus, have the opportunity for that one-seat -- the one-seat opportunity.

MR. GALLAGHER: Sure.

SENATOR KEAN: So your insights-- And Commissioner Lipper, who's a New York resident -- so this is a regional focus -- understands that this needs to be in New York, in addition to our Commissioners.

MR. GALLAGHER: And he is pushing that very strongly.

SENATOR KEAN: So I think, again, it gets to the point where -- I know you were talking about top-down efficiency, and making sure that the right decisions are for the right reasons. If we have that structural integrity of leadership, where you understand that this is a thing that has Commissioners; a national search for an Executive Director, or principle leader; and then you turn around and have the Governors having the right

oversight, and everything else -- you will have that solution that is more than just the two states coming together. You will have the infrastructure to look at that bus parking lot -- which you have identified -- as well as the broader capacity. So I--

MR. GALLAGHER: The basis for that would be there; the basis for that. It goes to back to what we said earlier: If it's a people problem, it's a people problem; and if you have to change the people, you have to change the people. If you need to renew Commissioner appointments on a regular basis, as opposed to having them stay indefinitely--

SENATOR WEINBERG: They get nominated by the Governors.

MR. GALLAGHER: But they're approved by--

SENATOR WEINBERG: So we can't renew anything unless they've been nominated.

MR. GALLAGHER: But they're approved by you, right?

SENATOR KEAN: Yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes.

SENATOR KEAN: The Senate has--

MR. GALLAGHER: Okay. But it could be -- I'll just throw this out -- could it be that the nomination by the Governor-- It's for a six-year term, right?

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: For a six-year term. So if the six Commissioners were laddered in such a way that one Commissioner would come due every year; and they would have to be renewed--

SENATOR WEINBERG: I think they are staggered, aren't they? They're staggered now.

SENATOR GORDON: They're staggered now.

MR. GALLAGHER: They're staggered, but they're not required to be renewed. They serve unless -- they serve until.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: Maybe that's something to look at. I don't know; maybe that's something to look at. That would force at least one Commissioner from New York and one Commissioner from New Jersey--

SENATOR WEINBERG: You mean, without holdovers.

MR. GALLAGHER: No holdovers; eliminate holdovers. And they could be held -- they can be renominated, but they would have to be renominated with your review.

MR. MAGYAR: It's an interesting idea.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, that's a good idea.

SENATOR GORDON: It's a good idea.

SENATOR KEAN: But I think the key to focus on-- How would you deal with the vacancy issue on that front? If, for example--

MR. GALLAGHER: The vacancy of a Commissioner?

SENATOR KEAN: Suppose there was a-- If I may; not to distract.

MR. GALLAGHER: No, go ahead.

SENATOR KEAN: We have a Supreme Court that has not been fully seated, in the State of New Jersey, for almost the entirety of Governor Cuomo's--

SENATOR GORDON: Christie.

SENATOR KEAN: Christie's tenure. Sorry; it's been a long day. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: Been a long day -- and it will be longer. (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: Exactly; of Governor Christie's tenure. All but his first year, we've had a completely unseated -- at least one, if not two, vacancies the entire time. Now, vacancies on the Supreme Court -- and we're not going to get into that issue here -- but they have an Appellate system where you fill up in case that happens. Now, we can argue whether that's appropriate or not.

If you have a vacancy because of an impasse in that circumstance, do you have insights on how you would get around that so they wouldn't have six to our five, or-- How would you ensure the continuity of the infrastructure?

MR. GALLAGHER: You mean-- Let's say, for example, that a Commissioner resigned from the Port Authority, or moved away -- or for whatever other reason, there was a vacancy. It would seem to me, then, the obligation falls to the Governor to nominate a successor. And that successor--

SENATOR KEAN: And if you have an impasse in the Legislature, because that nomination can't get through -- or the Governor simply is not going to nominate, for whatever reason-- This is a hypothetical--

MR. GALLAGHER: I hear you.

SENATOR KEAN: --on the head of the needle. I really appreciate your insights, because I think we have to get something that is sturdy and predictable.

MR. GALLAGHER: Off the top of my head, I don't know what to tell you. If there is an impasse among the Committee -- the Judiciary Committee that would review the nomination, I guess theoretically there would be a vote; the vote would be "no." The Governor would have an obligation to submit another name, I guess.

SENATOR KEAN: Okay.

MR. GALLAGHER: I mean, what else happens? If person *A* doesn't get accepted, then you have to go to person *B*.

SENATOR WEINBERG: We can let the Appellate Court--

SENATOR KEAN: The experience in the New Jersey Senate is the Senate simply does not take up the nomination for a very long period of time.

MR. GALLAGHER: Well, that's a different problem; I mean, that's a different issue.

SENATOR KEAN: I understand that.

MR. GALLAGHER: I'm suggesting that that not be the case with the Port Authority Commissioners. I agree with you -- you need six and six.

SENATOR KEAN: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: And there ought to be six and six.

SENATOR KEAN: And it has to be fully-- And the one thing that I -- and one of the things I know you had mentioned in your testimony -- which I do agree with -- the parts I heard were scintillating.

MR. GALLAGHER: Scintillating. Now, there's an adjective.  
(laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: The issue regarding an outside political influence going into those things could cause, truly, an impasse at the Port Authority. And I think that the thought process that you would need -- I've used the term before -- *a thumb on the scale*. Because a New Jersey Commissioner can't punch at weight with a New York Commissioner. Which seems to be the inherent thought process -- that you can't have, on equal footing, six-six, and one-one with the Governors, and whatever the confirmation process is, or whatever the authority process is. The thought process that we can't have an equal capacity from our Commissioners, to me, is offensive to all New Jerseyans.

MR. GALLAGHER: It's offensive in general.

SENATOR KEAN: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: I mean, I don't understand why that would be the case.

SENATOR KEAN: Well, that's why I'm saying we should have a straight line, six-six, top-down management, with no political influence within the day-to-day operations.

MR. GALLAGHER: Or if there is political influence from outside the Commissioner ranks -- either from the Senators, or from the Governor, or whatever -- that inappropriate political influence -- the Commissioners need to stand up and be counted. That's their job.

SENATOR KEAN: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: Now, Senator Weinberg doesn't-- And I agree; the current -- they have not done that. But that's what they need to

do, particularly in today's environment with the issues that you're dealing with, particularly.

SENATOR KEAN: And so our hope is that, yes, the vetting process from the Senate, through the Judiciary Committee, as well as through the full Senate; the nomination process by the Governors; the issue regarding communications. The fact that everything is online, in a way-- I mean, we have passed the OPRA and the other oversight components of the Port Authority oversight. So they are, now, adherent to--

MR. GALLAGHER: And they're complying.

SENATOR KEAN: They are complying to these things.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes.

SENATOR KEAN: But I think that there is a role for appropriate influence -- we talked about it earlier, and I know you were in the room -- of PATH, which happened only because the World Trade Center was happening.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes, that's right.

SENATOR KEAN: The ferry service happened only-- But those were Governors of New Jersey saying, "This is our priority, too."

MR. GALLAGHER: That's right.

SENATOR KEAN: So there is appropriate, and then there is inappropriate.

MR. GALLAGHER: The Port Authority also bought hundreds of buses for New Jersey Transit back in the 1980s.

SENATOR KEAN: Yes.

MR. GALLAGHER: So there's been-- New Jersey has had its share of Port Authority commitments.

SENATOR KEAN: So I think the goal is, let's get the streamlined structure. But I just appreciate your insights, because I know part of it was top-down, straightforward, mission-on-task.

MR. GALLAGHER: And I'll hasten to just emphasize that I come from 30 years of having been there, so I come from that perspective. And I understand your point of view, but I know what impact that has among the crew -- potential impact.

SENATOR KEAN: Well, I know that-- If I may, through the Chair-- I know that Senator Bagger, who is now on the Commission -- his father was at the Port Authority for--

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes, he was. I knew him well. Don Bagger -- I knew him.

SENATOR KEAN: --for many, many long years.

MR. GALLAGHER: I worked with him.

SENATOR KEAN: And it was an important and defining aspect of Senator Bagger's childhood and adulthood, and his commitment to the Authority is because of that legacy issue. And Mr. Bagger, Senior, was a very good man and a hard worker.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes, I knew him well.

SENATOR GORDON: I think we need to move on.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yes.

SENATOR KEAN: I'm sorry. Thank you for your longitude and latitude, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR GORDON: That's okay.

Thank you, again, Mr. Gallagher, for some very thought-provoking testimony.

MR. GALLAGHER: Thank you very much.

SENATOR GORDON: We're going to hear from our friends from the Amalgamated Transit Union, who have been very patient.

We're going to hear from Ray Greaves; this is a panel of three: Ray Greaves, State Chairman; Richard Stark, from Local 825; and Martin Heraghty, from Local 824.

Gentlemen.

**RAYMOND GREAVES:** Hello, Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank you for having this forum; Vice Chairwoman Weinberg and everybody else who is here this evening. It started out in the afternoon, but I guess it's the evening now. But we're still here.

I'm Ray Greaves; I represent the Amalgamated Transit Union -- over 10,000 employees here at New Jersey Transit and various private bus companies throughout New Jersey. We're the largest transportation union in the country, representing almost 300,000 employees; but most of our membership is here, in the Northeast region.

We live with this problem every day, with the Port Authority Bus Terminal. And we're here to give you our perspective of how it affects bus operators, how it affects our passengers; to tell you stories of how our bus operators sometimes have to wear adult diapers while they are riding their buses because of bathroom breaks, and facilities, and the lack of decent facilities at the outdated Port Authority Bus Terminal.

We want to make sure that this Committee pushes and stresses -- as you have been doing, Senator -- to make sure that in the capital planning the Bus Terminal is a number one priority. We have over 1 million bus passengers a week who travel in and out of New Jersey, back

and forth to New York City, through that Port Authority Bus Terminal. It is outdated, it is insufficient, and we need a complete overhaul. We need a new Port Authority Bus Terminal.

So with that, I'm here with Richard Stark, who is the President of the Local here in Oradell, in Bergen County. He's going to give you some of his perspective, how it affects his membership. And also, Martin Heraghty, from Local 824.

There was a comment made earlier this afternoon by the County Executive that you will all drive the bus. And I recognize all of your efforts, but if you want to drive a bus in New Jersey Transit, you better carry an ATU card. (laughter) I just wanted to put that on record.

But thank you. We also fully support your legislation.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

MR. GREAVES: We do agree there needs to be oversight; there needs to be more transparency. We wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the Bridgegate issue. So we thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

SENATOR KEAN: If I may?

SENATOR GORDON: Senator.

SENATOR KEAN: I'm sorry; through the Chair.

What are your thoughts on the bus parking over on the New York side, and what would that also do if we were looking at that?

MR. GREAVES: Yes, it's very tough. You do need to house more buses on the New York side for the evening commute back into New Jersey. Right now, we have two facilities: Galvin Lot, which is right outside of the Port Authority Bus Terminal. I know Senator Weinberg probably

saw that lot. It's a temporary lot; it holds, maybe, 20 buses. We get them there early, before rush, a couple of hours early. So they'll be in the City; they won't have the traffic to deal with.

But we do need a better facility; we do need to house more buses over on the New York side during those peaks in service.

SENATOR KEAN: How many?

MR. GREAVES: How many buses?

SENATOR KEAN: I mean, if you're looking at a facility, what's a number you're looking at that would be--

MR. GREAVES: I could tell you right now -- we probably have 200,000 passenger trips per day. So if you break that down, it's a lot of buses.

SENATOR KEAN: Yes, but, if I may -- I mean, you have the capacity in one lot, now, for 20 buses.

MR. GREAVES: Right.

SENATOR KEAN: You're a person who--

MR. GREAVES: We have a Weehawken Lot; we house buses in Weehawken. We house buses at the Galvin Lot over on the New York side.

SENATOR KEAN: But if you're saying -- if I may -- if you're saying that, right now, there's capacity for 20 in--

MR. GREAVES: The Galvin Lot.

SENATOR KEAN: --the Galvin Lot. In addition, what could you stage in the terminal as well -- what capacity do you need in New York?

MR. GREAVES: We need more capacity than we have now. We have no capacity right now.

SENATOR KEAN: But can you help me with a--

MR. GREAVES: I couldn't give you a number; I can get you--

SENATOR KEAN: Is it 50 buses? Is it 80 buses? Maybe, I don't--

MR. GREAVES: I would estimate, maybe, over 100 buses -- in that area.

SENATOR KEAN: You need staging for over 100.

MR. GREAVES: Yes, yes.

SENATOR KEAN: Okay -- staging for over 100.

MR. GREAVES: It's inadequate what we have now. It would help get those commuters who are coming back in the evening -- get them home a lot faster.

SENATOR KEAN: As well as help those of us who are driving in, in the off-hours as well.

MR. GREAVES: Sure. So we have operators who will travel, maybe, a couple of hours to get into the City during the start of their trip. We call it *deadhead time*. They'll deadhead into New York City, stage at the lot, and then take the bus back.

SENATOR KEAN: Okay, yes. Because I'm just trying to get a sense of the -- just the order of magnitude issue for that issue. Because I understand the importance of having that staging facility, but to the extent that -- at whatever point appropriate, if you could just get a sense of the order of magnitude of need. So we have 20, but we need 100 spots; or we need whatever-- If you could just get that, through the Committee, through the Chair, I would appreciate that.

MR. GREAVES: Sure, we can definitely get you those numbers. I know those numbers were being worked on. We are also associated with the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, and they have a lot of research on this issue. Also, our international office in Washington has been doing a lot of research on this issue. One thing we do know: We need a new Bus Terminal to relieve the stress of our operators, and also our passengers.

SENATOR KEAN: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Stark, Mr. Heraghty -- do you have some comments to make?

**RICHARD C. STARK:** Yes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the board (*sic*). My name is Richard Stark; I'm the President and Business Agent of Local 825. I represent the bus operators, clerical workers, and mechanics out of Oradell in Bergen County. I'm also a life-long resident of Bergen County.

As you know, there have been a lot of problems in the Port Authority. They're trying to say that they've fixed it; at least, New Jersey Transit is saying that. But I don't believe it's fixed; I believe it's really just putting more stress on the passengers and our operators.

As far as staging buses in New York City -- we did have a 29th Street lot that the rent got so -- it just went out of control, we had to take 50 buses out of there and put them back into the Weehawken Lot, which houses about 80 to 100 buses, maybe 110, which is-- Different locations: Mr. Heraghty's Local is in Howell -- they have buses there; and I have about, probably, 50 or 60.

The problem with staging buses for the Port Authority alone is that we have live trips going into New York. So our operators are driving throughout Bergen County getting people into the City all day. Some drivers are in the seat 10 hours, and the problems we're having there, with the inefficiency of the Port Authority, are restroom breaks. We need that Port Authority now, and I know it's not going to happen now -- but we do need fixes to the one that is already there. Like Mr. Greaves -- Chairman Greaves said, we're willing to work with anybody here; we do have experience in the transportation field. And I'll pass my card out after the hearing.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Bob?

SENATOR GORDON: A question--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Oh, I'm sorry.

SENATOR GORDON: If I may -- have you had a chance to look at the half-dozen or so options for different configurations of a Port Authority Bus Terminal -- the so-called *Option 3*, *Option 4*--

MR. STARK: No, I'm sorry--

SENATOR GORDON: --and how they might differ, in terms of where they would locate the buses?

MR. STARK: I'm sorry, I haven't.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay.

MR. STARK: My concern is, I'm hearing it's going to go further away from the entrance and exit of the Tunnel. And if that happens, it's going to be more congestion on the streets. Before they came

to a happy medium, where we are -- the passengers aren't waiting on line half as long as they were a year ago. Before that, it was so congested in the Port, they were diverting our buses onto 10th Avenue. So it was a complete traffic jam all the way around 10th Avenue, where our operators were getting tickets because they were getting stuck between lights, and they were just giving them tickets.

But I'm not really sure of where the plan is to build a new terminal.

SENATOR GORDON: Sir.

**MARTIN HERAGHTY:** Good evening. I'm Martin Heraghty from Local 824. My Local serves approximately 500 members from Monmouth and Ocean counties, South Jersey. I made the trip up here because it's important to me.

I just wanted to say thank you to the Chairman and all the elected officials for this meeting, and I was hoping that the other legislators in the other counties could be as involved, as you are, by bringing the Port Authority to light -- this problem that we're having.

Prior to me being union President, my experience as an operator of 18 years in and out of that Port Authority building -- with my experience, I just want to speak personally. Any questions you might have, please, bring them on. I might be the only operator in the building right now. (laughter)

First of all, the Port Authority building -- that it cannot be expected to keep up with today's current issues. A few of them, just briefly: the exhaust fumes, pollution for the members and the public in the

building. It's an old building; it can't continue with the overload that we're having.

Speaking of overcrowded: The people-- More gates; it's impossible, it's maximum capacity right now. And the people -- the long lines, as you mentioned, Senator -- that you turned off the escalator. So now a person's daily commute, "It only takes me 30 minutes to get home." Well, what about the time you stood in line just to get on the bus? An hour, an hour-and-a-half? It's ridiculous; it's to the point where it can't handle the load.

The employees: the bathroom, as Rich had spoken of before. New Jersey Transit came up with a temporary solution to the problem with the flow of traffic. They have installed the bathroom a block away for the employees. So if you need to use the restroom -- you came up from South Jersey, a two-hour trip -- "You can't use the bathroom in here; go outside a block away" -- which is a solution. It's a temporary solution, but it's gotten to the point where the building can't even let the employees use the restrooms. That's really embarrassing, as far as the Port Authority goes.

New equipment: CNG buses -- that's Compressed Natural Gas buses -- are from my garage. I'm only bringing that up because they weigh more than a regular diesel bus, and they have restrictions on them. And they have a seat restriction on them; in other words, there are no standees on the bus because of weight issues. The bus weighs more than a regular diesel bus. A diesel bus can approximately hold 15 more people. But a CNG bus -- it's heavy because of the tanks that hold the fuel underneath. It's a much heavier bus. That's new equipment that wasn't in the past. So the heavier equipment, now, is having a wear and tear on the roadways; it's

breaking up the concrete and the structure itself. And we have to take this into consideration, now, with this new equipment, including the old buses-- They used to be all 40-foot. Well, the new ones, now, are 45-foot. So now the buses are swinging wider; it's harder to negotiate inside the building, as far as the turning ratios-- So you're putting the members, in a way, in kind of a hazard way.

So in closing, I just want you to ask-- We need a new Port Authority building, because today's equipment-- But also for the future needs, for technology, and the ridership as it grows.

Thanks for this opportunity to express just a few issues my members are facing, as bus drivers, from day-to-day in the Port Authority. And, by the way, what a great source to ask. I remember you were saying, "Bring it to the Port Authority, bring it to the ramps, bring it to the people." Bring it to the employees. I cannot tell you how many suggestions I have from operators coming to me, which we can then give to you, with information. So as you do design this building, ask the employee who serves an 8- or 10-hour shift, and he knows what can be improved and can't be improved.

That's my time. Thank you, guys.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

I'd just like to respond to that. You know, I realize that, over these many months, we really have neglected to reach out to your organization. And certainly, since we're now looking at the Port Authority Bus Terminal in some detail, I think it would be extraordinarily helpful to have your input and suggestions.

I'm thinking that, perhaps, if you could collect these suggestions from your membership and summarize them for us, and get them to us -- I think that would be very helpful, because you bring a perspective that we certainly don't have.

MR. STARK: We would have liked to have brought some to the meeting, but they're all working. (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: How many seats are on the average bus?

MR. HERAGHTY: On the average bus, there are 57 seats on the newer MCI buses. But unfortunately--

SENATOR KEAN: There are 57 on the newer Compressed Natural Gas buses?

MR. HERAGHTY: Yes. There are 57 seats. We had old CNG buses, which were 49. But the 57-seat bus -- it only allows no standees; the weight is there. And it's only because of braking issues. The more weight you have, the longer it takes for that bus to brake; and that's a safety issue, because the tanks are so-- Titanium tanks are very heavy, so-- But, once again, we have to take into consideration that weight of that bus is coming into the Port Authority, and it's hitting the roadway and creating a structural situation, too, on the roads.

SENATOR KEAN: So I understand, through the Chair, from the weight issue, obviously, from the-- Well, you need titanium, because if CNG blows up, that's bad for everybody.

But the question is, if there are no standees-- So for each CNG bus, how many less commuters -- it's not just 15, because of the fewer seats. If there are standees going out as well, how many, functionally -- for the

exact same vehicle length, within 5 or 6 feet -- how many fewer commuters are you taking out each time?

MR. HERAGHTY: At the expense to create a cleaner-fueled bus with less pollution, I would say, roughly, around 20 people are not being accommodated because of that bus coming down the roadway.

SENATOR KEAN: So that would mean that for every -- excuse my math -- but for every three of these new buses, you'd have to buy one more. So you're now going to have to buy four buses for every three--

MR. HERAGHTY: Correct.

SENATOR KEAN: --of the old buses.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Sounds like pretty good math, actually. (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: I'm working at it; I'm working at it.

MR. HERAGHTY: I do not want to-- I wish not to--

SENATOR KEAN: I'm trying to think, is that 50 percent more, or 50 percent less -- and where do you start? (laughter)

MR. HERAGHTY: I wish not to speak for New Jersey Transit, of course. I am the union, so those questions might be directed, probably, more appropriately to the Board.

SENATOR KEAN: No, I'm just trying get-- I mean, the math is--

MR. HERAGHTY: I don't want to be out of line.

SENATOR KEAN: The math is, that for every one of these new vehicles, in addition to the weight concerns, the fact that you are having-- Each bus has 20 people, so that's -- if it's whatever percent; 20 percent less, 30 percent less ridership per bus, whatever it is. I mean, that's

also an issue that impacts these issues -- not just whether it's the efficiency or not at the Port Authority, through the Chair, but it's also the fact that these new buses -- the capacity is less. So even if you're slotting, it's like -- on the trains, you have double deckers, so you are able to do some of those things. But if you're slotting, it's the exact same. If you're going to have to put more vehicles to do the exact same capacity, then that is causing an inefficiency, as well as road damage.

MR. HERAGHTY: Correct.

SENATOR KEAN: Because not only is every vehicle greater weight, but there are more vehicles of that weight going along there at the expense of efficiency of commute.

MR. HERAGHTY: That's correct, sir; yes.

SENATOR GORDON: Any questions?

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, just a general comment.

This is very interesting and adds to the reason that we need a new Bus Terminal. But may I remind everybody up here that, on Thursday, the Port Authority -- as far as I know -- will again not vote to put the Bus Terminal into the 10-year capital plan. And that's the first step -- is to get it into the capital plan. Otherwise, the rest of this is interesting to find out, but we will never see it to fruition.

MR. GREAVES: That's one of the reasons why we're here, because we think it's really urgent and very important -- not only to us, but to our passengers, to your constituents--

SENATOR WEINBERG: I couldn't agree more.

MR. GREAVES: --that this Bus Terminal comes to fruition -- and soon. I heard the comment made earlier that the passengers will grow

by, maybe, 40 percent by the year 2040. You know, we need to be concerned about that. We have, unfortunately, in our eyes, leadership right now in this State that doesn't have the focus on transportation and issues surrounding transportation. And transportation is very important; it's vital to our economy, it creates jobs, takes cars off the road, reduces emissions. So it's very important. And accommodating these buses that are more fuel-efficient today would be a great way to move people.

SENATOR WEINBERG: You know, it's interesting -- and I think we learned this on our last tour of the Port Authority -- that some of the senior staff told us that there was, of course, a big increase in ridership after Sandy, and the problems with the trains and the PATH, etc. But that they actually kept a portion of those people who started to ride the bus after Sandy.

MR. GREAVES: Right.

SENATOR WEINBERG: That they are actually still riding buses. They didn't go back to the--

MR. GREAVES: They stayed; they found it easier, especially from Hoboken.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --other way, whatever other ways they were getting into the City. So it's kind of an interesting statistic -- that whatever increase took place, they maintained part of it, even after all the other problems were solved.

MR. GREAVES: And Senator, we can tell you, we have facts that the more transportation -- the more bus transportation that's available--

SENATOR WEINBERG: The more people--

MR. GREAVES: --the more people will ride. The problem is -- especially in some areas in parts of Union County, for instance, we represent -- there aren't enough buses, there aren't enough bus routes. Down in Toms River, South Jersey -- there aren't enough bus routes.

MR. STARK: I have it right in Bergen County, upper Bergen County.

SENATOR GORDON: But you can only put so many buses into that terminal.

MR. MAGYAR: That's the problem.

MR. GREAVES: You can only put so many buses in that terminal -- as it exists right now.

SENATOR KEAN: Because of the CNG mandate numbers.

But the issue-- Can I ask you this, because I know this is a little bit off-topic, through the Chair. Wouldn't you think also that the-- I mean, the bus routes need to be updated.

MR. GREAVES: Absolutely.

SENATOR KEAN: Because it seems to me that there are -- if you are going from Perth Amboy to South Plainfield, for example, not within -- mostly, I guess, not within the Port Authority purview. That could, theoretically, take an hour-and-a-half in certain circumstances; there is no direct way. And it seems to me that one of the things that we were not answering is the fact that to maximize efficiency, these routes should be updated on a -- quarterly is inefficient, but you could argue on an annual basis. You could figure, "What's the best way to make sure you get the most efficiency within the system, either connecting to the rail lines and connecting to other bus lines to get in," and what have you.

Do you have a sense on how -- not on specific routes -- but--

MR. GREAVES: New Jersey Transit does do that.

SENATOR KEAN: But do they do it in an efficient way?

MR. GREAVES: New Jersey Transit, I guess, does it as efficiently as they see fit right now. But do we think it could be done better? Sure.

We also have an issue, though, Senator, that the Transportation Trust Fund is about to go broke, and one of our concerns is not only adjusting of bus routes, but we need roads to travel upon, we need bridges to get across, and we need tunnels to get through. And what we see happening in New Jersey is scary. And when we have an Administration now that doesn't seem to really be focused on that aspect of what is affecting our riders, our workers, our constituents, we need to really step up -- as we've seen Senator Weinberg do recently with this New Jersey Transit, with this Port Authority Bus Terminal -- to bring these issues to light.

And a lot of times, Senator, things get lost where we feel bus riders, sometimes, are looked upon as second-class citizens. Because we attend a lot of meetings; we attend a lot of forums. And the emphasis is always on rail, rail, rail; Light Rail, Light Rail, Light Rail -- where we have the majority of commuters travel by bus. That's a fact. And it is the most reliable, the most convenient, and the most affordable way of transit.

And we just think more emphasis needs to be put on the bus side. And we would like to bring those issues to light; we offer our time to work with you--

SENATOR KEAN: I'd appreciate it.

MR. GREAVES: Absolutely.

SENATOR GORDON: If I could make a suggestion--

SENATOR KEAN: As you know, my District includes a huge chunk -- whether it's Roselle Park, or Springfield.

MR. GREAVES: My office is in Kenilworth, so, you know--

SENATOR KEAN: Yes, Roselle Park, Kenilworth, and west have a lot of bus commuters.

SENATOR GORDON: If I could make a suggestion. We have invited the Executives of New Jersey Transit to a hearing, just focusing on New Jersey Transit issues. We've had some problems in getting them to appear, but that's certainly a good issue to address at a separate hearing.

Let me thank you for appearing today; it's been very helpful. We'd appreciate any summaries of suggestions you can get to us.

ALL: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: And I think, with that, I'd like to invite our last witness in this segment to appear -- and that's Erica Jedynak; I hope I pronounced that properly -- from Americans for Prosperity.

SENATOR WEINBERG: They have a lot of patience, if nothing else.

**ERICA L. JEDYNAK:** I'm used to it.

SENATOR GORDON: I am pleased that we may find ourselves on the same page on this.

Please.

MS. JEDYNAK: Thank you, Chairman; and I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak with all of you today.

I'll try to keep it brief, because I know it's been a long day for many of us.

My name is Erica Jedynak; I'm the State Director for Americans for Prosperity here. And I previously, previous to this job, worked for Assemblywoman BettyLou DeCroce, so I sat in a number of transportation hearings over the past few years, and been on the other side, and certainly understand these long hearings and really what's needed here.

I submitted my written testimony but, like I said, I'll try to be brief.

Americans for Prosperity understands the need for long-term infrastructure investment, and how important it is for our economy here in the area -- not just for the City region, but all New Jerseyans, right? It's part of our GDP, part of our economy, as part of the East Coast corridor. All the trucking that comes around here, the pharmaceutical industry -- I can go on and on, really, about how it affects the economy here.

First-rate infrastructure is part of economic growth. And we are certainly supportive of greater transparency with the Port Authority. I'll just echo some of Assemblywoman Huttle's comments about how dysfunctional of an organization it really has been. And I commend the bipartisanship of this Committee for looking into more transparent methods, right?

These are taxpayer dollars, and Americans for Prosperity -- we pride ourselves in representing the taxpayers' voice. Often, with hearings full of lobbyists and special interests, we don't always get to hear some of the folks who are directly impacted by the policies. And I know the full commuter hearing will be later this evening, and it's important to note that these are -- these are public dollars that are being spent. The \$14 -- now it's

going to be \$15 to get in and out of the City -- this affects regular people, who usually don't have a voice here. So frankly, that's important.

Commute times -- a huge issue. I've been on the train myself; I've been late to a few meetings, just sitting for hours because there is some issue. You don't have when it's going to be resolved. You hear Amtrak blame New Jersey Transit and vice versa. It's throwing a bunch of blame around.

I think we're on the right track here for long-term investment -- not just a Band-aid project. Band-aids, actually, end up becoming more expensive -- more expensive.

Some of the comments I submitted in my written testimony include the prevailing wage, right? We want a more competitive workplace. And also, for some of the projects going on with Port Authority, I want to make that recommendation.

As far as moving away from some of the economic development areas -- as have been previously mentioned today -- we're supportive of that as well. Let's focus on the core functions of government, providing-- For example, the Bus Terminal absolutely needs updating, versus where dollars have been spent elsewhere with the Port Authority.

So again, if Americans for Prosperity can be of any assistance, we'd like to offer that -- as well as with any policy research. We work with a number of think tanks, and we'd be happy to offer our services, if possible.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay; thank you very much.

Any questions from the Committee.

SENATOR WEINBERG: If I could make just a comment.

It's not often that Americans for Prosperity appears before us--

SENATOR GORDON: I know.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --and that we might actually agree with, at least, a large portion of your testimony. So please, mark this down as a first. (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: And maybe we could bookend the conversation on that front. They should have been first.

SENATOR GORDON: What was your view on prevailing wage? (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: You should have been first; you were here.

MR. MAGYAR: And the *New York Times*, with Tom Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: I was going to say -- that's right, exactly. Loretta and I are--

SENATOR GORDON: I think this shows this Committee can bring everyone together. (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: I was going to say -- at the next tour at the Port Authority, I hope -- Joe and I hope that we're invited as well.

I appreciate your insights, because some of the things you've talked about -- not only in this packet, but in the others -- are just making sure we do everything with an eye towards efficiency. In the end, these are all taxpayer dollars, they are all taxpayers' time. Anything that slows down peoples' commute to home is something that impacts families, and other outside-work responsibilities for individuals.

And so your insights on how we can ensure that the economic model, or the leadership model, or the what have you are part of this

conversation will be very important. So thank you, not only for your insights, but also your patience in coming here and helping on this front.

MS. JEDYNAK: Thank you. Like I said, I've sat through many long hearings. (laughter)

But we do -- we have over 100,000 activists with our New Jersey membership here, as well as some in New York. Even though we don't have an official chapter in New York, we do have activists over the border. So again, this is very important for the New Jersey economy, and I look forward to working together with you all.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Great; thank you very much.

As far as I know, that is -- Erica is the last witness for this segment of the hearing. (laughter)

We're going to take an intermission.

Jack, did you want to testify?

JACK SAVAGE: (off mike): We're in good shape, okay?

SENATOR GORDON: Okay.

SENATOR KEAN: Can you say that for the record? (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: So we're going to take an intermission while there's a shift change; and I'm going to adjourn the meeting, and we will reconvene at approximately 6:30.

Thank you.

SENATOR KEAN: I think you meant *recess*.

SENATOR GORDON: Recess.

(Committee recesses)

(Committee reconvenes)

SENATOR GORDON: This meeting of the Senate Legislative Oversight Committee will come to order.

We are reconvening after our four-hour session this afternoon. We're somewhat disappointed that we don't have a larger crowd this evening, but I'm told it's because of massive traffic delays on the trans--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Bus Terminal.

MR. MAGYAR: The traffic cones have been moved, we're told.

SENATOR GORDON: --on the trans-Hudson crossings.

But we do appreciate those of you who have joined us this evening.

The purpose of this hearing -- and I'm not going to read the introductory statement that I had for the earlier session, because I don't think that's appropriate, given the small audience we have.

But just to summarize: The purpose of this hearing is really two-fold -- first, to hear any thoughts that witnesses would like to provide on our legislation that Senator Weinberg and I sponsored, as well as a second bill that Senator Kean is sponsoring -- which would reform the Port Authority. It would greatly, we believe, increase the transparency and accountability of the organization. This has been a project we've undertaken for about four years now.

As you may recall, bills that we sponsored last year were approved unanimously by both chambers of the New York and New Jersey legislatures by a collective vote of 612 to 0. There were two pieces of legislation. The bill that focused on transparency and accountability was vetoed the Saturday after Christmas by both Governors Christie and Cuomo.

And in June, we were pleasantly surprised when Governor Cuomo took action to, really, resurrect the process and, working with New York legislators -- including our partners in this effort -- extracted much of our bill from 2014, made some additions and deletions, and produced a bill that was approved by the New York legislature during the summer.

Senator Weinberg and I feel that bill would put New Jersey at a disadvantage, although it does represent major progress on the transparency and accountability fronts. But we are moving a bill that would amend the New York legislation to improve the oversight. One of the more important provisions of the bill would be to institute legislative oversight over the Port Authority. We would also improve the monitoring of major capital projects -- those projects of \$500 million or more. We would have independent monitoring of those projects. There would be an opportunity to subpoena -- we gave power to the Inspector General of the Port Authority to subpoena witnesses to facilitate his or her investigations.

And our bill would also establish guidelines for real estate transactions. It would create a mechanism for what we think is a better way of achieving some parity in the influence that the two states have over transportation policy.

And we have been holding these hearings in an effort to solicit input on this legislation. We heard from a number of expert witnesses this afternoon -- and also elected officials and retired employees of the Port Authority -- and got some very good ideas on the legislation.

The second purpose of this hearing is to talk about the priorities of the Port Authority. Every four years, the Port Authority looks at its capital budget, which really establishes the priorities for investment in the infrastructure of the region. And we are greatly concerned that projects that are of great importance to New Jersey are being neglected by the Port Authority Commissioners. We are specifically concerned about the fact that the Port Authority Bus Terminal, which is already at capacity and clearly inadequate for the tasks that we face, is not in the capital budget for the next 10 years. We are hoping that, at a meeting later this week, the Port Authority Board of Commissioners will include the Bus Terminal in the budget.

We are also concerned that the Port Authority only recently has expressed interest in supporting a trans-Hudson tunnel, which we think is critical to the economic future of the state. And we would also like to hear the views of commuters on these subjects, and any other needs that you may have. We are not riding the buses or taking the trains every day, as many of our constituents are. And we would like to get some input on areas that deserve some attention.

So we're hoping to hear suggestions tonight. We will be having another hearing next month in Hudson County; it may well be in Hoboken -- we're not sure. We are hoping to provide another opportunity for

commuters to speak, particularly those who might be taking the PATH system into New York every day.

And so with that introduction, I'll just turn to my two colleagues here. Would you like to add any comments, Senator Weinberg?

SENATOR WEINBERG: No. I'm assuming the lack of audience means, first of all, it's-- I'm not sure. Well, I would guess they're all still trying to get home through the Bus Terminal. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: I'm sorry that we have so few people here tonight. But we certainly had a productive hearing this afternoon. And if we have any commuters sitting in the audience, we hope they'll step forward and talk to us.

SENATOR GORDON: Senator Kean, any comments?

SENATOR KEAN: Yes. The key component here is to ensure that we have the most possible transparency and efficiency; making sure that there are no political extraneous approaches at the Port Authority; and that it's important that we, on a bipartisan basis, get this done.

As everybody in this audience may know, New York state has already passed legislation, on a bipartisan basis, through the legislature. And it's important (indiscernible) on the hybrid approach that I introduced in March. And my hope is that we can do this in a very, very quick way because the commuters, the families, and everybody who utilizes the airports and the ports are crying out for an immediate solution -- and that includes a top-down management change; it includes transparency and accountability; ensuring folks on transportation. That's the core mission, and it includes making sure that we get this done by year's end.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

We've gotten two slips; two people have indicated a desire to testify.

One is Lydia Crouch. Ms. Crouch, would you like to make a statement?

**L Y D I A C R O U C H:** (off mike) I have nothing to do with the transportation. I just came because I belong to a complex; I live in a complex in Wallington that is undergoing a rent increase of 98 percent with the State of New Jersey. And we've had several meetings of--

SENATOR WEINBERG: She's not going to be on the transcript, Bob, if she doesn't come forward.

SENATOR GORDON: Ms. Crouch, is it possible -- are you able to come up here so that we can get you on the record? I'm not sure we're going to be able to address your problems, but we can at least--

MS. CROUCH: (off mike) I don't know whether you can, either. A ton of people were supposed to be here tonight, and you can see I'm the only one.

SENATOR GORDON: Please take your time; just have a seat and we'll--

MS. CROUCH: Yes.

SENATOR GORDON: That way, we can get it into the transcript.

MS. CROUCH: I mean, I could read my letter to you, and it would be more to your understanding. But I'll just give you an idea. I've never been exposed to anything like this, so bear with me.

I live in a complex in Wallington that was introduced as low-income when I moved there 15 years ago. I am 71 years old, handicapped, still working, and a caregiver for an adult, mentally challenged son. So life is a little tough.

And when I first went to Jasontown Apartments, it was introduced as low-income housing with the State of New Jersey Mortgage Agency. And then they said that it's a moderate -- now they're saying it's moderate. And they are now trying to increase the rent. I went there paying \$500 a month rent 15 years ago; I'm now paying close to \$1000, because they do increase it every year. And now they're trying to increase it 98.43 percent -- which is double what I'm paying now.

And all the people who are at Jasontown are people like me -- elderly, handicapped, caregivers -- you know, who don't have the income to live-- You know, we have to live within our means. And Jasontown is comfortable, it's affordable. That's why we're there. It's not a palace.

SENATOR GORDON: Is this a property owned by the Nuckel organization?

MS. CROUCH: Yes, it most certainly is.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay.

MS. CROUCH: And we were just astounded when they proposed this rent increase because, the week prior to them sending this proposal to us, I was given a piece of paper from the management office saying that they were keeping the rent at the same rent I was paying for 2016.

SENATOR GORDON: You know, since this hearing really is on a totally different subject--

MS. CROUCH: I know.

SENATOR GORDON: But I know you've made an effort to come here.

What I would suggest-- If you don't mind just staying a little longer, I will be happy to sit with you, and I'll have a staff member here take down this information and we'll--

MS. CROUCH: I have it all written out.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay.

MS. CROUCH: Yes.

SENATOR GORDON: Even easier. We'll make sure that Senator Sarlo, who represents Wallington, I believe, is made aware of it; and we'll certainly make sure that this issue comes before the appropriate State authority.

MS. CROUCH: We have until the end of the month to provide them with letters.

SENATOR GORDON: We'll act expeditiously on that.

I thank you for bringing it to our attention, and we'll try to get the kind of resolution that you're looking for.

MS. CROUCH: Thank you for listening; I do appreciate it.

Thank you. I'll go back and sit down.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you for coming out.

SENATOR GORDON: It brings back memories of being a Mayor. (laughter)

MS. CROUCH: I'm sure, I'm sure.

SENATOR GORDON: I see Nick Lento in the audience as well. You know you have a small crowd when you recognize everybody in the audience. (laughter)

SENATOR WEINBERG: Hi, Nick.

NICHOLAS LENTO: Greetings, everybody. Hello, Loretta.

SENATOR GORDON: I wonder if you could, just for the record, identify yourself and your contact information.

MR. LENTO: Sure. Yes, Nick Lento, Cliffside Park, New Jersey. I think you have my name, and address, and phone number, and e-mail on the form you have in front of you.

You can hear me, writer-downer? (laughter)

HEARING REPORTER: Yes.

MR. LENTO: Anyway, there are a few quick things I want to address.

I think it's great that you've come up with a bill to somewhat respond to the action taken by Governor Cuomo and the legislature there. But I think that when you talk about the things in his bill that you may not particularly like, I think that it's great that you catch that because, in my view, the devil is in the details. Both Governors Cuomo and Christie vetoed something which, bipartisanly, unanimously, was passed by both legislatures. To me, that action by those Governors is very close to an obscenity, in terms of public policy -- that these two Governors could do something like that didn't, in my opinion, raise enough ire. I think that those vetoes should have been overturned, posthaste. And the fact that both legislatures did not have the fortitude -- and I won't use the other word -- didn't have the courage to back up their unanimous principled votes

with-- All that it would have taken is two-thirds or three-fourths -- whatever that number is -- to overturn the vetoes. So that tells me the legislatures in both states and in both houses were afraid of something. What were you afraid of? Governor Cuomo and Governor Christie were not going to come to your house and beat you up; those days are over. That's not going to happen. No one is going to put you guys in jail; no one is going to try and trump up charges against you, or raise your property taxes, or change the zoning on--

You know, I go to meetings at the level of town -- town meetings -- where people have issues. Believe it or not, there are a lot of people who are afraid to go to their local town council and their meetings because they're afraid of some kind of petty retribution just for speaking out about this or that issue. You guys are not in that position; you're Assemblymen and you're Senators. So I just want to reiterate that it was a mistake not to have overturned those two vetoes.

Now, with this legislation that's pending now -- it's new, and if both Robert Gordon and Loretta Weinberg are for it -- and I assume Tom Kean Jr. is for it, too -- I think that it's probably going to be good. And you want to try to get the New York people to move in your direction.

But nonetheless, I would love to see -- and maybe I'm just fantasizing out loud -- but I would love to see both New Jersey chambers reintroduce the original legislation with all of the more ideal, the more strict aspects to it that would have gotten more transparency and more accountability from the Port Authority. And re-pass those again; make the Governor veto it again -- if he has the nerve to do that when he's running for President. I think that would make a good national story.

Now, that's one thing. May I have another minute?

SENATOR GORDON: You can take all the time you want.

MR. LENTO: If anybody wants to respond, I'd be happy to listen to it.

SENATOR GORDON: I mean, if I could just respond to that, and I suspect Senator Kean might want to say something.

You know, I don't know whether it's constructive for us to revisit the history. What we have now are two bills -- one, Senator Kean's bill, which reflects the bill that emerged from New York. There are some amendments that Senator Weinberg, and I, and Assemblywoman Huttle would like to make that add legislative oversight and some better monitoring, and some structural changes that we think would be better for New Jersey.

But I am really confident that, at the end of the day, after we have these hearings, that Senator Weinberg, and I, Senator Kean, representatives of the two New York Governors, and our counterparts in New York can all sit around a table and just work out some language that we can all live with. I think that the bills that have emerged from New York represent a step forward; we have some serious concerns, particularly about the oversight issue. But I'm confident that we can work this out and get something done that will represent real progress.

I'll let Senator Kean speak for himself, but I'm sure he wants to sit at that table too.

SENATOR KEAN: I appreciate the -- through you, Mr. Chair -- I appreciate the color commentary.

As you well know, we did draft legislation that was the hybrid basis for future New York action; that was the first one that actually said, in legislation, transportation needs to be the key focus; that you need to have a top-to-bottom organizational shift; you would be banned from outside political influence in that hybrid piece of legislation; as well as most -- actually, all of the workable provisions of the earlier work.

We did not include in the original bill-- I mean, should the original bill pass, as you would wish, there would be Deputy Executive Director positions -- a position that no longer exists anywhere on the face of this earth at the Port Authority. So we would be going backwards in that regard, as well as -- so, from that position.

We would have-- And that's from one extreme. And to the other extreme, since the original bill was based off of New York state promotion and accountability standards -- that every single individual who earned \$64,000 a year, including overtime -- which would include many Port Authority police officers -- would have to file a Financial Disclosure Statement that would be public to every single individual in the world.

So to the extent that you would say, "Let's originally pass a bill," that clearly what we've now seen on a bipartisan basis is, there is a better way. Now, when I introduced the bill back in March, with all due respect, there was not commonality that there was a better approach. There now seems to be commonality that there is a better hybrid approach, to say, "Let's focus on the real solutions. The top-to-bottom accountability in a straight organizational chart; transparency -- as best as humanly possible; a bipartisan approach that focuses on making sure that there are solutions."

So to the extent that we were focusing on real, hard, timely solutions -- that is what this legislation is attempting to do. My argument is we shouldn't have waited past March; we have. My hope is that we can get it done by year's end. But to the extent that you want to look back and look on something that is an outdated mechanism -- to me, simply for the issue of the override -- is looking back, as opposed to a better, more forward-thinking approach in this regard; that whatever version we're looking at recognizes that the hybrid approach -- which focuses on accountability, transportation, transparency, and making sure that the Port Authority has a positive effect for the people of the region, as well as of the world -- is the best approach.

MR. LENTO: I think that the line-by-line analysis probably would show that you're making some improvements in a bill that may be outdated in some respects -- so that's good. But I suspect that there are other devilish details in the original legislation that had something tighter, which is now being looser.

And I apologize for not being expert enough, or prepared enough, to tell you exactly what those aspects of the bills are. But I suspect that there are reasons that Cuomo and Christie vetoed those bills, and it wasn't just the overtime provision -- because that could have been remedied like that (snaps fingers) if it was just those two issues.

Anyway, I don't want to dwell on--

SENATOR KEAN: I was using one extreme to the other.

MR. LENTO: Yes, exactly.

SENATOR KEAN: Meaning, a leadership position that no longer existed, for example, all the way down. And we can talk, through the

Chair, with all, line by line, about what the differential is. But the key is, the approach that was addressed in March says the best possible thing has the -- one approach, which was the administrative solution that both Governors thought, which was: management structure, focus on transportation in one area; and the aspects of the legislative approach, which focused on transparency and other approaches. The hybrid approach seems to be the one that is going to, in whatever version, win the end of the day. And I think, from the commuters' perspective, from a taxpayer's perspective, from a region's perspective, that the hybrid approach is the best possible one, and the one that seems to have bipartisan support in-- First of all, in New York, it passed already -- the hybrid approach; and New Jersey -- my hope is that we will not be long afterwards.

MR. LENTO: Well, I think I probably used up normal amounts of time.

If I may make one general point, in addition. I think the legislative fixes that you are proposing probably -- not probably; will most likely will improve the status quo, so I am for them. I'm an incrementalist; I don't believe we can turn things around, upside-down in one day.

However, I remember attending hearings in Newark right after Bridgegate -- I think it was the second, maybe the third one that Loretta attended; it was the first one for me. It was in Jersey City, not Newark. And when she was there saying that things should be looked into, none of the Port Authority Commissioners at that meeting spoke up to back her up; nobody responded to her questions. She was talking to Pat Schuber directly, and he was there, and he ignored her.

SENATOR GORDON: His peril.

MR. LENTO: Then they had the press conference afterwards that I snuck into and got to be part of that. And I heard Bill Baroni speak off-the-cuff at the press conference and say a lot of stuff that turned out to be pure BS. What I want to say is that I think that the legislation that you're going to pass will improve things, but I think that the problems with the Port Authority run very systemic and very deep. And I don't see any indications yet that the whole thing has been overturned. I don't think we can wait for Paul Fishman to rescue us. I suspect's that what's needed -- and the states can't do it; New York and New Jersey can't do it. I would hope that your Legislature and the New York legislature would say to the Congressional delegations of both states that, "We would like you to hold hearings and to revisit the whole issue of the Port Authority and the way it's structured." Because that's where the Port Authority can be reformed, from the roots up. And hearings in Congress are, I think, what's really needed to deal with the structural issues, because too much of what goes on -- not just in the Port Authority, but in New Jersey Transit, and in government in general -- is determined by connections that are made between -- I hate to say this -- but between contractors, vendors, politicians, campaign contributions, networks of cronies, friends, relatives -- whatever.

And there is not necessarily any *quid pro quos*; I'm not saying anything even illegal is going on -- because a lot of this stuff is actually legal. So what we need are reforms that change the way business is done so that all the decisions that are made, are made on the basis of rational, intelligent, functional policy; and what's best, and what's going to save money and improve service. As long as decisions are made on that basis, everybody is

going to be happy -- Republicans and Democrats. But there is just too much--

And maybe it's just a perception; maybe I'm being very cynical. But most of the public -- I hate to tell you guys -- thinks that there is a lot of shenanigans going on. And this thing with Bridgegate, you know, only made that a thousand times worse.

So to the extent that it's possible to try to get the Congressional delegation-- Maybe we'll have a better Congress next -- two years from now; who knows?

Anyway, I will be quiet.

SENATOR GORDON: I would only tell you that I understand the point you're making. I don't have a whole lot of faith in Congress now. (laughter) And, frankly, I would say that the people sitting up here who represent commuters, whose lives are affected every day by the Port Authority, have a much greater interest in solving this problem than some member of Congress from Dubuque.

I will also add that if, for some reason, we can't reach some kind of compromise here -- and, again, I think we will -- another approach is to go the Congressional route. I've had a conversation with a member of the staff of Senator Schumer, and I've spoken to Senator Booker about this. I just think, practically speaking, this is something we should be doing at home rather than in Washington.

Would anyone else like to--

SENATOR WEINBERG: You know, I think that we have a chance to come up with a hybrid bill that we can send back to New York. If we use their bill as a basis, and amend it, because I know -- and I've

expressed it several times this afternoon -- to me, a very important part of this is the legislative oversight and the ability of the -- the requirement that the Legislature hear from these people once or twice a year. Because we know that, in the future, other people will be sitting here. We know that, in the future, this will go off the front pages of the newspaper. And the only way, in my opinion, that we can make sure that the appropriate oversight or public knowledge is guaranteed is by this legislative oversight.

Secondly -- somebody referred to it earlier today -- the New York bill was put through with very little oversight; no public hearings whatsoever were done. Senator Gordon can attest to, in a week, they had no public committee hearings -- nothing. They have a different way that they can push bills through on the other side of the river.

And very important things were left out, like the so-called -- and I can't think of the polite word for *slushfund*. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: Regional Development Funds.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Oh, the regional banks -- thank you very much. They were left in. Our bill makes those, kind of, setting aside--

SENATOR GORDON: Redeploys them to transportation.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --money for the Museum of Modern Art, etc., as not appropriate.

So there are a few important things, I think, that we need to tweak or change in the New York bill. And if we can get a bipartisan agreement here, we will have gone a long way to reforming the Port Authority. There are no guarantees; and as I expressed earlier to another person who appeared here, there are no heroes in the drama *Bridgegate* --

whether we're talking about the Commissioners themselves, or the very senior staff at the Port Authority who followed orders.

MR. LENTO: The closest thing we have to a hero is you, at this point.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Well, and you know what? I was responding to constituents.

MR. LENTO: Right.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So that's a job that we all have -- that we all collectively share.

So I think we have a good chance; I think with Senator Kean's cooperation on this Committee -- and he has certainly been as interested as the rest of us have been to hear everything that we've heard.

SENATOR KEAN: As I said before, I've been working on Port Authority issues since the early 1990s.

SENATOR WEINBERG: You're not old enough to have worked on anything for that many years. (laughter) I'm sorry.

SENATOR KEAN: The days of Lillian Liburdi, Senator Weinberg. I've been working on dredging issues and everything else for the Port Authority. (laughter)

SENATOR WEINBERG: But you must be confusing yourself with your father, I'm sure. (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: He did too; he did too.

SENATOR WEINBERG: And he did too.

I'm only teasing; you know that.

SENATOR KEAN: He got the waterways; he got the waterways as part of that focus.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, that's true.

So I'm hoping that we can reach an accord on that. And I don't know whether to consider this an indication of the improvements at the terminal, or that we made this too early and not convenient; because we've posted meetings that had 200 people present expressing the hostility that they felt about their quality of life issues.

SENATOR GORDON: Maybe we should hold the hearing at the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Oh, no. They're too much in a rush. Have you ever tried--

SENATOR GORDON: I don't know. I think some of those people would take a later bus to share their thoughts. (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: If I may, one of the things that-- Not to let out secrets, Mr. Chairman, but my experience is always that you-- People have all the time in the world when they're going to work -- not when they're going home. So in my neck of the woods, you would never stand blocking Track 5 to get out. You would also never stop them at the Bus Terminal or anything else.

But while they're waiting in line to go someplace, they've got all the time -- they are more than happy to listen; not all the time, but happier to listen. So to the extent that you would do it on the front end, rather than back end -- you would probably make a lot more friends than enemies.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes. In our last trip in, the press did interview some folks waiting on line.

SENATOR KEAN: I saw that.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes.

SENATOR KEAN: I saw that. Joe Kyrillos and I weren't invited on that, but I hope the next time we will be. (laughter)

SENATOR WEINBERG: You're always welcome to come to the Port Authority with me.

SENATOR KEAN: In the spirit of bipartisanship.

MR. LENTO: Just a nuts-and-bolts suggestion, and then I'll leave.

It's not my idea; I read this online, and I think it's a great idea -- because it's going to take years for a tunnel to come through. People are talking about service from New York to Newark Airport, direct, right? But that's going to take a long time and billions of dollars in the future.

What you have now is the possibility -- if we can get the MTA, the Port Authority, and NJT to cooperate, why not have a single ticket that all three agencies provide? You buy this ticket; anybody in the five boroughs -- you know where I'm going--

MR. MAGYAR: That's a great idea.

SENATOR GORDON: I've heard that before.

MR. LENTO: You buy one ticket, you get your subway, you get your PATH train, you get into Newark, you get the train that goes to the terminals. I mean, you'll have to route them a little bit, and you give them a little map with the ticket, if needed. But for maybe \$20, or whatever it's going to cost, I think it's a great idea. It's so simple. This is something that if it comes from you guys, maybe they'll do it.

SENATOR GORDON: It's certainly something you can see in other great cities of the world -- where one ticket will take you on the buses, or the Paris Metro, or wherever. It is certainly a good idea. I mean, we're --

our state, our region is hampered by the fragmentation we have. And you're quite right -- things would work better if--

MR. LENTO: We need to cooperate more than compete.

SENATOR GORDON: Right, yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Well, the first cooperation we need -- which we've also repeated several times -- is we need to get the Bus Terminal into the 10-year capital plan. And we have not seen any indication that there are enough votes from the Commissioners on the Port Authority to achieve that. Hence, my request much earlier today that we request that we have a meeting directly with the Port Authority Commissioners in a conference room setting.

MR. LENTO: I think I'm done for now.

I thank you very much for giving me this much time.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you, Nick. Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you, Nick.

My understanding is that the folks sitting along the side the room are from Wallington. And we're going to sit with you after this meeting.

Freeholder DeNicola, would you like to offer any comments?

**F R E E H O L D E R M A U R A R. D e N I C O L A:** (off mike)  
Sure.

SENATOR GORDON: And Jason Redd, you know, as long as you're sitting here, if you'd like to-- (laughter)

FREEHOLDER DeNICOLA: Please.

SENATOR GORDON: Any members of the staff want to--  
(laughter)

FREEHOLDER DeNICOLA: That's right; since we're just killing time. I didn't expect to--

MR. MAGYAR: Frank is next; Frank is next. (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: Frank Dominguez. Who else has driven from Camden this morning? Camden County -- right here; the longest commute. (laughter)

SENATOR WEINBERG: If we had a centerpiece, you'd win it.

FREEHOLDER DeNICOLA: Right -- the longest ride home, too.

SENATOR GORDON: Freeholder Maura DeNicola, thank you for being here.

FREEHOLDER DeNICOLA: Please -- thank you, Senator, and thank all of you.

I didn't expect to speak; I was here this evening, really, to listen to the public.

I do thank all of you for what you are doing; and I do have great hope -- given that I know each of you -- that you will come to a bipartisan solution, because certainly transportation is a non-partisan issue.

And I know there are great issues here with it in New Jersey, and in Bergen County, in particular, since I represent Bergen County. And given that I'm as frustrated as you at how empty the room is, I wondered if you would consider -- not to give you added work; and I certainly would volunteer to help out -- but have a public listening, if you would, as you were saying just before, on the buses, and on the trains, and on the platforms, and at the stations in the morning so that those commuters could give you little sound bites of their frustrations and also their ideas.

Because there are a lot of great ideas out there from the people who ride these trains and buses every, single day for years and years. And we want to keep them here in New Jersey.

So I just ask if you would consider that, as you gather information. And I offer any help that you may need in doing that.

And thank you once again for all you're doing. And I look forward to a better New Jersey; certainly, a New Jersey with some fixed transportation in the future. Because that's really -- that is what drives so much that we do here. We're on the verge of American Dream; we are right outside of New York City. And so many of our citizens here are commuters. And while we are trying so hard to keep jobs here in Bergen County -- to keep corporations, companies, businesses here -- we also need to keep our commuters here.

So thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

Any closing comments from the Committee? (no response)

Seeing none--

SENATOR WEINBERG: I would just, really --

SENATOR KEAN: We almost-- (laughter)

SENATOR WEINBERG: I'm really quite sorry about that.  
(laughter) Stay in your seat.

SENATOR GORDON: It was a close one.

SENATOR KEAN: We were moving.

SENATOR WEINBERG: No, I really -- hopefully, Senator Gordon, as the Chairperson of this Committee, you will reach out to Chairman John Degnan and ask that such a meeting be set up. Okay?

SENATOR GORDON: Okay, I most certainly will.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Then Senator Kean will be free to go. (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: I always like to be invited. I never go anywhere unasked.

SENATOR WEINBERG: No, you'll be invited.

SENATOR GORDON: With that, I'm going to adjourn the meeting.

Thank you all for attending.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you.

**(MEETING CONCLUDED)**