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From: Foye, Patrick  
Sent: Friday, September 13, 2013 7:44 AM  
To: Fulton, Cedrick; Durando, Robert  
Cc: Baroni, Bill; Dunne, Joseph P.; Kouroutsos, Louis; Zipf, Peter; Samson, David; 'Rechler, Scott'; Buchbinder, Darrell  
Subject: Fort Lee eastbound access to GWB  
Importance: High

After reading last night's media pendings, I made inquiries and received calls on this matter which is very troubling. Here is what I learned: reversing over 25 years of PA GWB operations, the three lanes in Fort Lee eastbound to the GWB were reduced to one lane on Monday of this week without notifying Fort Lee, the commuting public we serve, the ED or Media. A decision of this magnitude should be made only after careful deliberation and upon sign off by the ED. Reports are that Fort Lee has experienced severe traffic delays engulfing the entire Fort Lee area since Monday. I am appalled by the lack of process, failure to inform our customers and Fort Lee and most of all by the dangers created to the public interest, so I am reversing this decision now effective as soon as TBT and PAPD tell me it is safe to do so today.

I am making this decision for the following reasons:

1. This hasty and ill-advised decision has resulted in delays to emergency vehicles. I pray that no life has been lost or trip of a hospital- or hospice-bound patient delayed.
2. This hasty and ill-advised decision has undoubtedly had an adverse effect on economic activity in both states. That is contrary to the directive we have from our Governors to do everything possible to create jobs in both States.
3. I will not allow this hasty and ill-advised decision to delay the travels of those observing Yom Kippur tonight or the holidays to follow.
4. I believe this hasty and ill-advised decision violates Federal Law and the laws of both States.

To be clear, I will get to the bottom of this abusive decision which violates everything this agency stands for; I intend to learn how PA process was wrongfully subverted and the public interest damaged to say nothing of the credibility of this agency.

Finally, I am open to considering changes to each of our facilities if there is a case to be made that change will benefit the public interest. In the case of the Fort Lee eastbound access lanes, approval of this action will require:

1. Written sign off by TBT, Traffic Engineering and PAPD. That sign off was not sought or obtained here.
2. Prior discussion with the local government and a communication plan and plenty of advance notice to the commuting public. That did not occur here.
3. Consideration of the effects on emergency vehicles and sign off by PAPD. That did not occur here.
4. Consideration of the financial impact on the PA in terms of O/T. That too did not occur here.

Tell Bob—please let this group know when access to three lanes in Fort Lee can be restored as soon as possible today. This is a matter of public safety and time is of the essence.
Tab 3
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Cedric and Bob—please let this group know when access to three lanes in Fort Lee can be restored as soon as possible today. This is a matter of public safety and time is of the essence.

Pat

NOTICE: THIS E-MAIL AND ANY ATTACHMENTS CONTAIN INFORMATION FROM THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY AND AFFILIATES. IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS E-MAIL IN ERROR, PLEASE NOTIFY THE SENDER IMMEDIATELY, PERMANENTLY DELETE THIS E-MAIL (ALONG WITH ANY ATTACHMENTS), AND DESTROY ANY PRINTOUTS.
Tab 4
NY TRANSIT

Bridge Jam's Cause a Mystery

New Jersey Officials Say They Weren't Warned That Local Lanes Would Be Closed

By TED MANN and HEATHER HADDON

Updated Sept. 17, 2013 11:12 p.m. ET

No one denies that the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey triggered massive traffic jams when it shifted local toll lanes at the George Washington Bridge from New Jersey last week. But local officials, and some within the Port Authority itself, are scratching their heads over a larger question: Why?

Police and elected officials in Fort Lee, N.J., say they weren’t given warning that the Port Authority planned to reduce the number of local access lanes directly from Fort Lee to the bridge from three to one—causing traffic to back up in the borough—and are still puzzled by the official explanation that the agency was conducting a study of traffic patterns.

After the two local lanes handling Fort Lee traffic were closed, cars and trucks quickly clogged streets used by local travelers to reach the bridge and New York City. Local officials said the backup led to long delays for Fort Lee buses traveling for the first day of school Monday.

Within the Port Authority, meanwhile, the decision to close the traffic lanes caused tension, people with knowledge of the matter said. Those people said the lane closures came as a surprise to some high-ranking officials at the bistate agency, which operates area bridges, tunnels and airports.

The local lanes were reopened Thursday morning, one of the people said, after an order from Executive Director Patrick Foye, who argued that the abrupt shift in traffic patterns caused a threat to public safety and should have been advertised to the public ahead of time.

For its part, the agency was sticking with a written statement, "The Port Authority has conducted a week of study at the George Washington Bridge of traffic safety patterns," it said. "We will now review those results and determine the best traffic patterns at the GWB. We will continue to work with our local law enforcement partners."
A Port Authority spokesman declined to elaborate or provide a further explanation of the origin, purpose or conclusions of the study.

Fort Lee Mayor Mark Sokolich, a Democrat who was first elected in 2007, said he found out about the lane closures Monday morning when the borough was turned into what he called "total gridlock."

The borough hall was flooded with hundreds of calls from angry motorists, Mr. Sokolich said.

"I get that the Port Authority tries different things. I'm very, very grateful that once they realized that this change was causing traffic gridlock, they ended it," said Mr. Sokolich, a local attorney. Mr. Sokolich said it still wasn't clear to him who ordered the closures or why.

Fort Lee police said they learned of the lane closures when traffic began backing up, down the north-south artery of Palisade Avenue, Deputy Chief Timothy Ford said.

"We called their police and they were like, 'We can't help you, it's coming from [our] higher-ups,'" he said. When the local police tried to ask the Port Authority leadership what was going on, he said, "They weren't returning our calls."

Mr. Ford said the police were eventually told the Port Authority was "trying something new" in the layout of the travel lanes leading to the toll plaza.

"I've been here 33 years, and in all that time we've always had three lanes dedicated to the Fort Lee traffic," he said. "And then on this Monday morning, with no prior warning, they decided to try something new."

A spokesman for the Christie administration referred questions to the Port Authority. A spokesman for the state Department of Transportation said the agency has no jurisdiction over the toll lanes and wasn't involved with any traffic study.

Amid the controversy, there was even speculation that the closures could be retribution for Mr. Sokolich's decision not to endorse Mr. Christie in his re-election bid in November. The Christie campaign has received endorsements from at least 48 elected Democrats across the state, including 17 mayors.

Mr. Sokolich said he had a good relationship with the Christie administration and couldn't imagine he would be important enough for the campaign to punish him for not publicly endorsing Mr. Christie. The mayor said he was supporting Democratic Sen. Barbara Buono, Mr. Christie's challenger.

"I've always been incredibly supportive of Gov. Christie even in the face of people criticizing me for it. I find it incomprehensible that there's any truth whatsoever to these rumors," he said.

Kevin Roberts, a spokesman for the Christie campaign, said that any notion that Mr. Sokolich faced retribution for not endorsing the governor was "crazy."

"We don't approach these folks and say, 'You will endorse us.' These are folks who have supported us" on their own, Mr. Roberts said.
Still, Mr. Sokolich said the incident made him wonder if he had run afoul of someone, somehow, though he didn't name anyone or any organization. "Maybe I'm getting too popular. Maybe I'm doing too many things, been too progressive," said the mayor, noting a spate of development in the borough. "We are proud of it. I've got to believe they are happy with the results."

Write to Ted Mann at ted.mann@wsj.com and Heather Haddon at heather.haddon@wsj.com
Tab 5
Attached is a letter from Senator Weinberg to Commissioner William Pat Schuber, complaining about the traffic pattern change on the GWB.
September 19, 2013

Commissioner William Pat Schuber
The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
225 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10003

Dear Commissioner Schuber:

Again, I find myself at a loss for words in responding to the questions posed by my constituents in regards to the rationale behind decisions made by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Last year I was at a loss in discussing the rationale behind the toll increases without meaningful public input and now I am at a loss for words regarding the Authority's sudden change in the traffic flow pattern to the George Washington Bridge from Fort Lee. Reducing the number of lanes during peak traffic times has caused a significant hardship for many in the area. This decision, made with no public comment, has created significant congestion in Bergen County.

I am disappointed in the Authority's response, but on a personal level I am disappointed in your lack of advocacy on behalf of the residents of Bergen County. When you were confirmed before the Senate you stated, both privately to me and publicly, that you were going to be the voice for Bergen County residents to the Authority. Sadly, at least based on your public actions, this does not appear to me to be the case.

It is my hope that this will change and you will ask for answers for the residents of Bergen County. I also hope that you will insist on greater transparency from the Authority.
In the next couple weeks, I would like you to meet with me and my colleagues from the District to discuss the change in traffic patterns as well as the greater issue of transparency with the Authority. Please let me know when you are available to meet.

Sincerely,

Loretta Weinberg
Senator, District 37

cc. The Honorable Governor Chris Christie
    Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle
    Assemblyman Gordon M. Johnson
    The Honorable Mark Sokolich, Mayor of Fort Lee
    Chairman David Samson
Tab 6
NY TRANSIT

Port Chief Fumed Over Bridge Jam

Patrick Foye Fired Off an Email Message After Learning of Lane Closures

By TED MANN
Oct. 1, 2013 10:40 p.m. ET

The abrupt closure of local access lanes to the George Washington Bridge last month triggered a pointed private response from the executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, who said the move likely broke state and federal laws and could have caused deaths because of snarled traffic.

The executive director, Patrick Foye, fired off an email message early on the morning of Sept. 13, after he learned of the lane closures and subsequent traffic backups in Fort Lee, N.J., from a daily internal list of pending media inquiries.

Mr. Foye's blistering email, which was sent to top executives of the authority and was reviewed by The Wall Street Journal, denounced the closures as "abusive" and pledged to investigate "how PA process was wrongfully subverted and the public interest damaged to say nothing of the credibility of this agency."

"I pray that no life has been lost or trip of a hospital- or hospice-bound patient delayed," Mr. Foye wrote, a reference to ambulances caught in traffic.

The closure of the lanes was seen by some in Fort Lee and Bergen County as retribution from surrogates of Republican Gov. Chris Christie—who shares control of the authority and its bridges with New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo—at Fort Lee Mayor Mark Sokolich, a Democrat who hasn't endorsed Mr. Christie for re-election.

Mr. Christie's campaign has denied the suggestion, and called the notion "crazy." The governor's
appointees at the authority have said that the lanes were closed to conduct a traffic study, though they have declined to provide any supporting materials or findings.

Mr. Christie's spokesman referred questions to the Port Authority, where a spokesman declined to comment.

Mr. Foye, an appointee of Mr. Cuomo, wrote that the lane closures were made without informing numerous interested parties, including himself, local and Port Authority police, Mr. Sokolich, and commuters.

His email also throws into question the Port Authority's prior explanation for the shutdown: that the lanes were closed so the authority could perform the traffic study.

In the email, Mr. Foye listed the divisions within the authority that weren't consulted before the traffic pattern was changed, including the police department, and the Traffic and Engineering division.

The authority's public response has described the lane closures as part of "a week of study at the George Washington Bridge of traffic safety patterns."

People familiar with the matter disputed that. "There was no study," one of them said.

Mr. Foye's email was sent to Robert Durando, the general manager of the bridge for more than a decade, and Cedrick Fulton, director of the Tunnels, Bridges and Terminals Department and Mr. Durando's boss. Copied on the message were the highest level leadership of the authority, including Mr. Christie's two top appointees, Chairman David Samson and Deputy Executive Director Bill Baroni.

Mr. Durando referred inquiries to the authority's press office. Requests to speak to top port executives weren't answered Tuesday.

The lane closures winnowed the approach routes from Fort Lee to the bridge to one from three, and triggered massive congestion in Fort Lee for four straight weekdays, officials said. The lanes were reopened within minutes of Mr. Foye's email on Sept. 13.

Some Bergen County Democrats were livid over the sudden closures. Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg, a Democrat who represents the county, wrote to authority Commissioner William Schuber to express her dismay last month, saying she was at a "loss for words" about the closure, according to a copy of the letter reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.

"This whole traffic jam still remains a mystery," she said Tuesday.

Mayor Sokolich said he hasn't received answers to his request for information about why the authority ordered the closures. Still, the mayor said he was a supporter of many of Mr. Christie's policies, and didn't believe that the closures were intended to punish him, a theory he said had been the subject of "rumors."

—Heather Haddon contributed to this article.
Tab 7
Tab 8
Sent: David Wildstein
Received: Bridget Kelly

Just finishing a meeting:

Sent 9/17/13 1:56 PM
OK. I'm in board meeting but can step out to call when you're ready
Sent 9/17/13 2:28 PM
Baroni crazed so let me know when to call, I have something at 3 I can't walk out of
Sent 9/17/13 2:36 PM
WSJ just called my cell so I need to speak with you.
Received 9/17/13 2:42 PM

I am calling your office. No answer
Received 9/17/13 5:13 PM

I spoke to Mike:
Sent 10/2/13 2:14 PM
You around now or still wait until 4?
Received 10/2/13 2:14 PM

In a meeting until 3:
Sent 10/2/13 3:15 PM
Ok will see you at 4
Received 10/2/13 3:16 PM

3 works:
Sent 10/2/13 2:19 PM
I have Regina at 3
Received 10/2/13 2:20 PM

That's awful
Received 10/2/13 2:20 PM

Ok
Sent 10/2/13 2:55 PM
Is 3 still good?
Received 10/2/13 2:58 PM

Just finished. Come by after Regina
Sent 10/2/13 2:59 PM
Regina cancelled on us so I'll blow this off, will be down in 10 minutes
Received 10/2/13 3:03 PM

Ok
Received 10/2/13 3:14 PM

I'm here
From: Baroni, Bill <bbaroni@panynj.gov>
Sent: Sunday, October 6, 2013 9:14 AM
To: Regina Egea <Regina.Egea@gov.state.nj.us>
Subject: Re: Monday

RI: I spoke with Charlie yesterday. He thought best that sen Weinberg be told that while we don't have public comment at committee meetings, an exception should be made out of deference to her being a senator. Then apply the standard 3 minute limit with no dialogue.

I'm sure her remarks will be harsh.

bb

Sent from my iPhone

> On Oct 6, 2013, at 7:34 AM, "Regina Egea" <Regina.Egea@gov.state.nj.us> wrote:
> Where did we come out as to Comm mtg? R
Tab 10
Sen Weinberg attended bd mtg but did not speak. Had a hallway conv w Strunsky and Ted Mann before bd mtg. After Bd mtg, she was admitted into ante room where the press gaggle is held. Typically only press and PANYNJ exec team.

Questions ensued on ft lee but holding to script of "all under review.". She held post interview in hallway. R
From: Bell, Matthew <mbell@panynj.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 4, 2013 2:31 PM
To: Baroni, Bill <bbaroni@panynj.gov>
Cc: DiMarco, Gretchen <gdimarco@panynj.gov>
Subject: Phone call: Regina Egea [redacted] returning your call
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Tab 13
NY REGION

George Washington Bridge Jam Began With Phone Call

People Familiar With the Matter Pinpoint a Cause for Traffic Tie-up

By TED MANN
Nov. 7, 2013 11:27 p.m. ET

Early on the morning of Sept. 9, an official of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey appeared at the New Jersey side of the George Washington Bridge and looked out over a traffic jam he helped create, according to people familiar with the matter.

The official, according to these people, was David Wildstein, who was hired in 2010 as the authority's director of interstate capital projects by an appointee of Gov. Chris Christie.

The previous day, a Sunday, Mr. Wildstein called two bridge officials and ordered them to shut off two local access toll lanes for drivers headed across the bridge from Fort Lee, N.J., into New York City, the people familiar with the matter said.

According to these people and authority correspondence reviewed by The Wall Street Journal, the closures were made without notice to police, emergency officials or officials on the New York side of the Port Authority's leadership. As previously reported, the closure triggered large traffic jams for a week in the borough on the New Jersey side of the bridge.

Mr. Wildstein didn't respond to requests for comment.

People familiar with the matter and some local officials believe it wasn't what the Port Authority originally suggested: a lane closure to allow for a study of traffic patterns. Instead, they believe it was a gesture aimed at the borough's Democratic mayor, who had declined to cross party lines to endorse Mr. Christie for governor two weeks earlier.

The mayor, Mark Sokolich, said he believed the intent was "punitive" in a letter sent to Deputy Executive Director Bill Baroni, Mr. Wildstein's boss, asking for relief from the traffic jam in
September. Mr. Sokolich has since backed away from that assertion, and declined to elaborate this week.

Mr. Christie's re-election campaign spokesman has called the notion that the closures were retribution "crazy."

Mr. Wildstein's role could become clearer as some Democrats pressure the authority to release the results of its internal review of the incident. Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg said she is trying to marshal votes for a resolution that would empower a state Senate committee to issue subpoenas seeking answers.

"If in fact somebody has used the George Washington Bridge for any petty reason, whether retribution or just because they think the mayor of Fort Lee is a pain in the rear end, that is disgusting and despicable and dangerous," Ms. Weinberg said in an interview.

Senate President Steve Sweeney said Democrats are continuing to investigate the matter. "I'm not going to accuse anyone of anything yet, but something is clearly not right here," he said.

The governor's spokesman declined to respond to questions about Mr. Wildstein and the authority. "For goodness sake, the Governor of the state of New Jersey does not involve himself in traffic surveys," the spokesman, Michael Drewniak, said.

As previously reported, Patrick Foye, the agency's executive director and an appointee of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, reacted with outrage when he discovered the lane closures and ensuing traffic problems.

In an email message previously reported by The Journal, Mr. Foye suggested the closures could have led to deaths of ambulance patients.

The people familiar with the matter said Mr. Wildstein wields considerable clout inside the authority, which manages a vast portfolio of bridges, tunnels, trains and airports in the New York region.

A former mayor of Livingston, N.J., who later ran the influential blog PolitickerNJ under a pseudonym in New Jersey, Mr. Wildstein is a ubiquitous figure at the agency, people familiar with the matter said. They said he is known to roam the authority's Manhattan office to see what employees are working on and also approves even low-level hiring decisions.

Political influence from both sides of the bi-state agency is common, according to people at the authority. Major decisions at the Port Authority—such as what infrastructure projects to fund, and how to manage the two states' shared assets—are typically the result of horse-trading between the states, with respective political appointees acting on behalf of each state's governor.

Messrs. Cuomo and Christie each have the right to veto the minutes of a meeting of the authority's board, essentially enabling them to negate an official action, and in theory requiring the states to cooperate.

—Heather Haddon contributed to this article.
Great. We will be ready.

Sent from my iPhone

> On Nov 12, 2013, at 10:07 AM, "Regina Egea" <Regina.Egea@gov.state.nj.us> wrote:
>
> Right now targeting 11:30am Thurs. Will confirm shortly. R
Tab 15
SENATE RESOLUTION No. 127

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

215th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 7, 2013

Sponsored by:
Senator LORETTA WEINBERG
District 37 (Bergen)
Senator RAYMOND J. LESNIAK
District 20 (Union)

SYNOPSIS

Constitutes Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism and Historic Preservation Committee as special committee to investigate lane closures implemented by Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; grants committee subpoena power.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.
A SENATE RESOLUTION constituting the Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism and Historic Preservation Committee as a special committee of the Senate to investigate lane closures implemented by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

WHEREAS, The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey ("Port Authority") is a bi-state agency established by compact between the State of New York and the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, From September 9, 2013 to September 13, 2013, the Port Authority closed two access lanes from Fort Lee to the George Washington Bridge without providing notice to commuters and officials from Fort Lee; and

WHEREAS, As a result of the decision to close the two access lanes, severe traffic delays reportedly engulfed the entire Fort Lee area, creating a public safety issue by delaying emergency vehicles and subjecting drivers to unexpected and potentially dangerous traffic patterns; and

WHEREAS, On September 13, 2013, the access lanes were reopened only after the executive director of the Port Authority learned of the lane closures and ordered that the access lanes be reopened; and

WHEREAS, In correspondence to Port Authority officials on September 13, 2013, the executive director claimed that the method by which the access lanes were closed reversed over 25 years of George Washington Bridge operational procedures and cited lack of process, failure to provide notice of the lane closures, and public safety as the reasons for reopening the lanes; and

WHEREAS, In response to questions regarding the access lane closures in Fort Lee, the Port Authority's response has been that the access lanes were closed as part of a traffic safety study but no additional information regarding the traffic safety study has been provided; and

WHEREAS, The circumstances surrounding the closure of the two access lanes from Fort Lee to the George Washington Bridge require further examination; and

WHEREAS, It is entirely fitting and proper for this House to investigate all aspects of lane closures implemented by the Port Authority, now, therefore,

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

1. The Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism and Historic Preservation Committee is constituted as a special committee of the Senate in accordance with the provisions of chapter 13 of Title 52 of the Revised Statutes. The membership of the committee as previously constituted is reconstituted and continued.
2. The committee shall investigate all aspects of lane closures implemented by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, including, but not limited to, the recent closure of two access lanes from Fort Lee to the George Washington Bridge, the internal process followed by the Port Authority in implementing lane closures, and the use of lane closures as a tool to conduct traffic safety studies.

3. For the purposes of carrying out its charge under this resolution, the committee shall have all the powers conferred pursuant to chapter 13 of Title 52 of the Revised Statutes, including, but not limited to, the power to issue subpoenas to compel attendance and testimony of persons and the production of books, papers, correspondence, and other documents.

4. The committee shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of the State of New Jersey, any political subdivision of the State, and any agency thereof, as may be required and as may be available for that purpose, and to employ any other services as may be deemed necessary, in order to perform the duties provided herein, and within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for that purpose.

5. This resolution shall take effect immediately and the committee’s powers pursuant to chapter 13 of Title 52 of the Revised Statutes shall expire 12 months following adoption of this resolution by the Senate.

STATEMENT

This Senate resolution constitutes the Senate State Government, Waging, Tourism and Historic Preservation Committee as a special committee of the Senate to investigate lane closures implemented by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, including, but not limited to, the recent closure of two access lanes from Fort Lee to the George Washington Bridge from September 9, 2013 to September 13, 2013, the internal process followed by the Port Authority in implementing lane closures, and the use of lane closures as a tool to conduct traffic safety studies.

During the 12 months following adoption of this resolution, the committee will have the power to subpoena witnesses and documents as well as all other powers conferred pursuant to chapter 13 of Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.
Tab 16
The George Washington Bridge is the busiest bridge in the world. In 2012, more than 102 million vehicles crossed the bridge connecting Fort Lee, New Jersey and New York City. The bridge is a vital lifeline for commuters, visitors, and commerce.

As the busiest bridge in the world, the George Washington Bridge also experiences significant traffic backups—usually during rush hour. It is not unheard of that, due to the volume from more than 200 NJ municipalities and NY that on the bridge, drivers can wait in backups lasting more than 45 minutes during the morning and evening rush. Drivers from more than 200 New Jersey municipalities often sit in traffic leading into New York City every morning.

On a typical weekday, about 105,000 vehicles with E-ZPass travel eastbound on the George Washington Bridge from New Jersey to New York. Vehicles with E-ZPass tags registered to a Fort Lee address account for 4.3% of the total traffic. The other 69 municipalities in Bergen County make up an additional 42.4%. Vehicles come from all parts of New Jersey (eighteen counties in total), from New York, and from dozens of other states.

These traffic backups affect the lives of drivers from throughout the region. They also cause residual traffic delays in the host municipalities of the bridge—Fort Lee and New York City. Because of these impacts, over the last decade the Port Authority has spent nearly $15 million in Fort Lee to assist the community in ameliorating the impacts of this traffic. Most of these funds have been spent on improvements to the local roadway network near the bridge and for the Fort Lee municipal parking lot.

Drivers using the bridge pay a toll to cross the bridge eastbound only. This means that vehicles entering New York can use one of the twelve toll lanes on the upper level of the bridge—three of which are specially segregated for local Fort Lee traffic only. On an average weekday, ______ lanes are designated for cash toll payers and ______ lanes.
are reserved for E-ZPass users. Traffic enters these toll lanes using a variety of approaches, including Routes 80, 95, 46, and 4.

**BACKGROUND**

About a decade ago, according to Port Authority employees assigned to the George Washington Bridge at that time, then-Fort Lee Mayor Jack Alter (who was also a Bergen County Freeholder and a Commissioner of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities) insisted on the creation of special segregated entrance lanes to the bridge for vehicles coming from local streets in Fort Lee. These lanes were created by placing traffic cones to block all other traffic from using three toll lanes from all other approaches. This reduced the number of toll lanes from twelve to nine. This forced the creation of three special "Fort Lee Lanes"—lanes segregated for use only by residents of Fort Lee who access them via Martha Washington Boulevard.

This plan allowed Fort Lee residents to avoid the longer traffic lanes experienced by non-Fort Lee residents and enabled them to bypass the general traffic backup at the bridge. None of the other five Port Authority crossings—Lincoln Tunnel, Holland Tunnel, Bayonne Bridge, Goethals Bridge and Outerbridge Crossing—contain such segregated lanes. (Weehawken at the Lincoln Tunnel; Jersey City at the Holland Tunnel; Bayonne at the Bayonne Bridge; Elizabeth at the Goethals Bridge; and Perth Amboy at the Outerbridge Crossing.)

These segregated lanes were ordered by the Port Authority without any recorded traffic study, without any analysis of their impact, and without consultation with any Bergen County municipality or government (outside of Fort Lee). According to Port Authority police officers present at that time, they were ordered to create and enforce these special, segregated lanes in response to the directive from Mayor Alter to Port Authority staff.
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Vehicle E-ZP as Registration for Total Vehicles

% of Total Vehicles

Eastbound Traffic

As a result, a large number of cars—especially those on the Upper Level of the bridge—will have their available lane reallocated to elsewhere. It is important to note that trucks are not permitted on the Lower Level, so the bridge's heavy truck traffic must complete with cars for the diminished lane capacity during the morning rush.
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2013

In August 2013, following multiple conversations with members of the Port Authority Police Department, Port Authority Director of Interstate Capital Projects David Wildstein met with Port Authority officials in Engineering, Traffic Engineering, and Tunnels Bridges and Terminals to review the situation of the segregated Fort Lee Lanes. He asked the Office of the Chief Engineer to recommend the best way to review these Special Lanes to determine the possibility of reduced traffic congestion by changing the treatment offered to vehicles coming from one municipality.

On August 28, 2013, the Port Authority's Chief Traffic Engineer created several scenarios to modify the Special Lanes. This included the option of setting aside all traffic cones so that traffic is allowed to move freely from various approaches. It was the recommendation of the Chief Traffic Engineer that Fort Lee traffic should be segregated from the other approaches by the use of traffic cones, regardless of the number of toll lanes it is feeding. This was aimed at reducing the risk of sideswipe crashes. These scenarios included reducing the total number of Special Lanes from three to either two or one, but continuing some segregation to reduce the risk of sideswipe crashes.
Chart 1: Shows current composition of three segregated lanes from Fort Lee onto the Upper Level Toll Plaza. (Office of the Chief Engineer, August 28, 2013)
Since the traffic flows are extremely congested during the morning peak periods, Fort Lee traffic should be segregated from the other approaches, by use of traffic cones, regardless of the number of toll lanes. It is feasible to reduce the risk of side-impact crashes.

Shown here is Fort Lee traffic feeding the two right most lanes of the toll plaza.

Chart 2: Shows possible scenario of two segregated lanes from Fort Lee onto the Upper Level Toll Plaza. (Office of the Chief Engineer, August 28, 2013)
Chart 3: Shows possible scenario of one segregated lane from Fort Lee onto the Upper Level Toll Plaza.

(Office of the Chief Engineer, August 29, 2013)
Chart 4: Shows zero segregated lanes from Fort Lee onto the Upper Level Toll Plaza. (Office of the Chief Engineer, August 28, 2013)
After reviewing the current lane structure and the scenarios offered by the Chief Traffic Engineer, on September 5, Mr. Wildstein requested the special segregated lanes not be eliminated entirely, be reduced from three to only one, for a one week period so that staff could analyze the resultant traffic flow. He asked that the study begin on the following Monday, for one week. The study was intended to determine if these segregated lanes cause a clear and marked increase in traffic into the bridge for users from other areas of Bergen and Passaic Counties and across the state.

On the morning of September 6, the Chief Engineer notified the Director of Tunnels, Bridges and Terminals (TBT) that the study would begin on the morning of September 9. Shortly afterwards, TBT Director notified his staff, including the General Manager of the George Washington Bridge. The Chief Engineer asked the TBT Director to have their respective traffic staff work together to assess any and all impacts. This also happened on the morning of September 6. It was determined that three signs would need to be changed for the duration of the one week test: one at the corner of Bruce Reynolds Boulevard (BRB) and Hoyt Avenue, one on the Hudson Street median just north of BRB, and one on the Martha Washington Boulevard median just south of BRB. These signs, which depict lanes usage approaching the Upper Level Toll Plaza, were to be covered by facility maintenance prior to Monday morning. These signs would remain covered for the duration of the test. Bridge staff also notified the Port Authority Police Department, who handled the reduction in lanes on the morning of September 9.

At all times during the week of the review, the Port Authority police monitored traffic. They were alert for any emergency vehicles in the area of the bridge and prepared to further alter traffic patterns in the event of an emergency. Mr. Wildstein was at the bridge early on September 9 to observe the effect of traffic, both locally in Port-Lee and on other vehicles.
utilizing the full span.

The bridge staff did note that this test was labor intensive. Because the one lane dedicated to Fort Lee was a cash lane, it was necessary to have a relief toll collector on duty.

According to bridge staff, the return of two lanes to general use resulted in a moderate relief and reduction in traffic times for non-Fort Lee Lane users. However, the reduction in segregated lanes resulted in significant traffic in the Borough of Fort Lee. On Friday, September 13, Port Authority Executive Director Pat Foye ordered the Fort Lee lanes returned to use by Fort Lee users only.

EARLY DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was limited, partly due to a traffic accident on the Cross Bronx Expressway on Monday morning, and to the early termination of the study on Friday morning. Still, there was a notable difference in the movement of traffic for the 95% of vehicles that do not come from Fort Lee. For example, on Tuesday morning, the bridge general manager noted that the I-95 approaches were free and clear by 8:30 AM.

Traffic Engineering performed an analysis for Tuesday, September 10 and observed some improvement in the overall travel time in the non-segregated (non-Fort Lee) lanes during the morning peak period, which runs from 6AM to Noon. According to Traffic Engineering:

* For traffic originating on the I-95 Express Lanes, an average reduction of 4.00 minutes in travel time was observed — a reduction of 47% of the time it normally takes.

* For traffic originating on the I-95 Local lanes, an average reduction of 2.76 minutes in travel time was observed — a reduction of 40% of the time it normally takes.

Additionally, there was also improvement on Wednesday, September 11:
For traffic originating on the I-95 Express Lanes, an average reduction of 4.12 minutes in travel time was observed — a reduction of 52% of the time it normally takes.

For traffic originating on the I-95 Local lanes, an average reduction of 2.72 minutes in travel time was observed — a reduction of 43% of the time it normally takes.

The Chief Traffic Engineer noted that the improvement in the travel time on the non-segregated lanes should be weighed against the deterioration of level of service for the local traffic originating from Fort Lee.

COMMUNICATION

The implementation of the reduction of Fort Lee Lanes from three to one was not accompanied by customary communications, both within the Port Authority and externally. The Borough of Fort Lee was not notified of the closures in advance. These communication breakdowns cannot be repeated. The Port Authority relies on mutual cooperation both internally and with our community stakeholders. Not having complete buy-in within the agency and securing the cooperation of Fort Lee resulted in a lack of information that is not consistent with our agency’s commitment to transparency. While the question of the segregated Fort Lee Lanes is critically important, it must be addressed in an open and transparent manner. Future traffic studies will include outreach to municipal government officials where a facility is located.

FUTURE STUDY

Two clear lessons were learned from the September traffic study. First, a new formalized process will be implemented immediately to address any changes to lane configurations.

Beginning immediately, any traffic changes must be approved by both the Executive Director
and Deputy Executive Director\textsuperscript{2} and the Board of Commissioners must be notified. In addition, notification must be made to the local municipality and county not less than 30 days prior to implementation.\textsuperscript{2} (This would exclude emergency activity conducted in the interest of public safety.) This 30-day notification period will allow time for improved dialogue between the Port Authority, our host communities, and the public.

Second, the segregated Fort Lee Lanes are clearly a controversial issue in the region. Mayor A. Alter felt that in return for hosting the world's busiest bridge, the residents of Fort Lee deserved three segregated access lanes. As a result, other residents of Bergen and Passaic Counties—and all other bridge users—wait in longer traffic lines. This is an issue of regional significance that requires study by public officials and leaders both inside and outside the Port Authority. A final determination as to the future of segregated Fort Lee Lanes on the Upper Level Toll Plaza must consider whether it is appropriate for special access for one town to come at the expense of drivers from the rest of New Jersey and the region.

Therefore, the Port Authority will immediately create a Fort Lee Lane Task Force to study the lanes at the bridge. The agency asks that representatives of the five legislative districts in Bergen County participate along with representatives of the Bergen County Executive, Bergen County Freeholders, Borough of Fort Lee, New Jersey Department of Transportation, the Port Authority’s Chief Engineer, Chief Traffic Engineer, Director of Tunnels, Bridges and Terminal, the Port Authority Police Department, the Port Authority Law Department, and General Manager of the George Washington Bridge to review the traffic patterns at the toll lanes to determine in a public, open and transparent way how access to the George Washington Bridge should be configured.
By opening the process, both specifically at the George Washington Bridge and generally on other Port Authority crossings, the Port Authority will fulfill our commitment to transparency.

By including members of the public and their representatives, the Port Authority will benefit from the input of those who live and work around the George Washington Bridge.

We believe that the Port Authority will learn from the events of September 2013 and will be a more open, inclusive and transparent agency as a result.
Regina, Nicole and Mo,

I wanted to draw your attention to the Assembly Transportation Committee meeting scheduled for Monday. The committee intends to take testimony from invited guests and the public concerning the George Washington Bridge lane closure. Please find the agenda attached.

Regards,
Ned

From: Beebe, Glen [mailto:GBeebe@njleg.org]
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2013 4:52 PM
To: Ned Nurick
Subject: FW: ATR agenda 11/25/13

From: Chance, Melinda
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2013 4:40 PM
To: Magnolo, Theresa; Mainor, Asm. D.O.; Maria Efstratiades; Marilyn Davis; Mary Beaumont; MaryAnn O'Brien; Mauro Checchio; McGrath, Richard; McMahon, Maureen; Messenger, Mary Alice; michael@njchamber.com; Miriam Weeks; Moffo, Chris; Mysak, Susan; Neary, Adam; Nedza, Kevin; Newmeyer, Martha; Nicole davidman; O'Gara, Erin; Parchment, Elizabeth; Pat Luciano; Pat Snyder; Patricia McGuire; Pedersen, Vicki; Phyllis Elston; Quigley, Donna; Ramos, Asm. D.O.; Rebecca Donington (rebecca.donington@dot.state.nj.us); Renee Rapciewicz (e-mail); Richard Reibiz; Riley, Asw. D.O.; Robert Wolfertz (maritimus@roederer, Alise; Ron Thaniel; Rorer, Donna; Rudder, Asm. D.O.; Rumpf, Asm. D.O.; Ryan Goodwin; Sally Giordano; Sam Cunningham; Savner, Michael; Sciorio, Jennifer; Sean Gilmarion; Shawn Taylor; Sheridan, Thea; Simeon Hitzel; Stender, Asw. D.O.; Steve Dawson (snidc@snidc.org); Steve Embley; Suleiman, Mike; susan pigula; Sverapa, James; T. Chelius; Thomas Gagliano; Thurman Barnes; Tina Lado; Traino, Jerry; Velasquez, Lisa; Volpe, Greg; Weinberg, Sen. D.O.; Wendy McVicker; White, Keith; Williamson, Marilyn; Wisniewski, Asm. D.O.; Wolfe, Asm. D.O.; Wright, Rick; Wynne, Andrew; Kathy.Dringer@dot.state.nj.us; #LIS_AGENDAS; Adam Heck; AJ Sabathan (aj@amq101.com); Amanda.Gasperino@govelect.state.nj.us; Anmdeo, Asm. D.O.; Amy Melick; Anne Vroom (avroom@legislativesolutions.com); Avent, Tiffany; Barbara Hutcheon; Beebe, Glen; Benitez, Carmen; Beth Schermerhorn; Bender, Aaron; Bob DeSando; Boguchwala, Jonathan; Bonney Rivera (Bonney.Rivera@gov.state.nj.us); Bramnick, Asm. D.O.; Braxton Plummer (braxton.plummer@gov.state.nj.us); Brennan, Patrick; Brett Tanzman; Bridget Kelly; Buono, Charles A.; Burley, Dana M.; Calvo, Carrie Anne; Caride, Asw. D.O.; Carol Katz (ckatz@katzgov.com); Caruso, William; Chivukula, Asm. D.O.; Chris Filicello; Chris Jensen (E-mail); Chuck Leitgeb (cleitgeb@lcnj.org); Colin Newman (colin.newman@gov.state.nj.us); Collins, Natalie; Cryan, Asm. D.O.; David Behrend (dbehrend@njta.org); David Smith (E-mail); Davis, Justin; Dempsey, Jillian; DePiano, Debbie; Diane Walsh; Donahue, Kevin J.; Donnelly, Christopher; England, Rick; Gil Toth (gboh@gmail.com); Gary Poedubicky (gary.poedubicky@ips.state.nj.us); George M. Ververides (george.ververides@co.middlesex.nj.us); Giblin, Asm. D.O.; Gorman, John; Graber, Trish; Greenwald, Asm. D.O.; Helen Yeldell (hyl@hl@nslomb.com); Hester, Tom; J. Parrinello (j.parrinello@luthers.net); Jack Elliott (winigoover@ [redacted]); John Williams (aficlomike@ [redacted]); Jacqueline Botticello; James, Christopher; Janowski, Sally; Jeff Levy (jlevy@ns-law.com); Jeff Levy (jeff@paradiseshow.com); Jerry Clancy (jclancy@billtrak.com); Jiggetts, Marvin W.; Jim Gilroy; Jim McGarry; JoAnn Brooks (joan.brooks@dl.state.nj.us); Joe Fiordaliso; John Parrinello (john.parrinello@stifel.com); John W. Olcott (jjack@goverlanercompany.com); John Rauve@govelect.state.nj.us; Jonathan Pushman; Joseph Glover (joseph.glover@dl.state.nj.us); Joshua E. Hodes (john.hodes@ [redacted]); Joy Farber

OGNJ-LEG-009649
Please note the attached.

Melinda Chance
Secretary I
Office of Legislative Services
Authorities Section.
Phone: (609) 847-3810
Fax: (609) 292-0561
Email: mchance@njleg.org
New Jersey State Legislature

ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION, PUBLIC WORKS AND INDEPENDENT AUTHORITIES COMMITTEE
STATE HOUSE ANNEX
TRENTON NJ 08625-0058

COMMITTEE NOTICE

TO:     MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION, PUBLIC WORKS AND INDEPENDENT AUTHORITIES COMMITTEE

FROM:   ASSEMBLYMAN JOHN S. WISNIEWSKI, CHAIRMAN

SUBJECT: COMMITTEE MEETING - NOVEMBER 25, 2013

The public may address comments and questions to Charles A. Buono, Patrick Brennan, Committee Aides, or make bill status and scheduling inquiries to Kimberly Johnson, Secretary, at (609)847-3840, fax (609)292-0561, or e-mail: OLSAideATR@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.

The Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Independent Authorities Committee will meet on Monday, November 25, 2013 at 10:00 AM in Committee Room 11, 4th Floor, State House Annex, Trenton, New Jersey.

The committee will take testimony from invited guests and the public concerning the decision by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to close, without prior public notice, access lanes to the George Washington Bridge in Fort Lee, New Jersey from September 9, 2013 to September 13, 2013. The committee will also take testimony concerning the safety hazards and economic losses resulting from that closure.

The following bills will be considered:

A-205 DeAngelo/Ramos/Benson
Eliminates DOT approval of municipal traffic calming measures in business districts.

A-1389 Wilson/Ramos/Burzichelli
Provides for uniform basic structure of taxicab fares in certain municipalities.

A-2053 DeAngelo
Provides that probationary license holder may transport siblings in addition to dependents and one additional passenger.

(OVER)
A-2757 Quijano
Directs MVC to establish driver's license endorsement for autonomous vehicles.

A-4355 Spencer
Requires PANYNJ to conduct noise and land use compatibility survey.

A-4458 Wisniewski/Amodeo/
Requires use of headlights on motor vehicles when motor vehicle is
Prieto/Giblin operated in an area of highway construction or repair.

A-4461 Wisniewski
Prohibits operator of motor vehicle from engaging in distracted driving.

AR-168 Giblin
Supports extension of New York City IRT Flushing Line into New Jersey.

Issued 11/20/13

For reasonable accommodation of a disability call the telephone number or fax number above, or TTY for persons with hearing loss 609-777-2744 (toll free in NJ) 800-257-7490. The provision of assistive listening devices requires 24 hours’ notice. Real time reporter or sign language interpretation requires 5 days’ notice.

For changes in schedule due to snow or other emergencies, call 800-792-8630 (toll-free in NJ) or 609-292-4840.
Tab 18
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Chance, Melinda" <MChance@njleg.org>
Date: November 20, 2013 at 4:43:06 PM EST
To: "Baroni, Bill" <bbaroni@panynj.gov>
Cc: "Buono, Charles A." <CBuono@njleg.org>, "Brennan, Patrick" <PBrennan@njleg.org>, "Dempsey, Jillian" <jdempsey@njleg.org>
Subject: Invitation-Assembly Transportation Committee 11/25/13

Attached please find an invitation to appear before the Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Independent Authorities Committee on Monday, November 25, 2013 at 10:00 am in Committee Room 11, 4th Floor, State House Annex, Trenton, New Jersey.

Melinda Chance
Secretary I
Office of Legislative Services
Authorities Section
Phone: (609) 847-3840
Fax: (609) 292-0561
Email: melchance@njleg.org
November 20, 2013

Mr. William Baroni, Jr.
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
Deputy Executive Director
225 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10003

Dear Deputy Executive Director Baroni:

As you know, on September 9, 2013 the Port Authority inexplicably and without prior public notice reduced the three eastbound lanes to the George Washington Bridge to one lane. These closures resulted in delays to the traveling public and, more importantly, to emergency service vehicles. The community of Fort Lee, New Jersey was engulfed in gridlock during the morning rush hour until the lanes were reopened on September 13th. I respectfully invite you to testify before the Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Independent Authorities Committee concerning these issues.

The committee will be meeting on Monday, November 25, 2013 at 10:00 am in Committee Room 11, 4th Floor, State House Annex, Trenton, New Jersey.

Please be advised that failure to appear before the committee will result in the issuance of subpoenas to require personal appearance to testify before the committee on this matter.

It would be greatly appreciated if you or a staff member would contact Jillian Dempsey at the Assembly Majority Office to discuss your availability to testify before the committee. Ms. Dempsey can be reached at (609) 847-3500 or at jdempsey@njleg.org and would be happy to discuss any questions or other issues you may have.
I look forward to your presence at this meeting.

Very Truly Yours,

John S. Wisniewski,
Chairman, Assembly Transportation
Public Works and Independent
Authorities Committee

c Jillian Dempsey, Assembly Majority Office
Tab 19
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Chance, Melinda" <MChance@njleg.org>
Date: November 20, 2013 at 4:43:06 PM EST
To: "Baroni, Bill" <bbaroni@panynj.gov>
Cc: "Buono, Charles A." <CBuono@njleg.org>, "Brennan, Patrick" <PBrennan@njleg.org>, "Dempsey, Jillian" <jdempsey@njleg.org>
Subject: Invitation-Assembly Transportation Committee 11/25/13

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Melinda Chance
Secretary I
Office of Legislative Services
Authorities Section
Phone: (609) 817-3840
Fax: (609) 292-0561
Email: mchance@njleg.org
November 20, 2013

Mr. William Baroni, Jr.
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
Deputy Executive Director
225 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10003

Dear Deputy Executive Director Baroni:

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Mr. William Baroni, Jr.
Page 3
November 20, 2013

I look forward to your presence at this meeting.

Very Truly Yours,

John S. Wisniewski,
Chairman, Assembly Transportation
Public Works and Independent
Authorities Committee

c Jillian Dempsey, Assembly Majority Office
Corrupted File
Tab 20
From: Bell, Matthew <mbell@panynj.gov>
Sent: Thursday, November 21, 2013 11:03 AM
To: Baroni, Bill <bbaroni@panynj.gov>
Cc: DiMarco, Gretchen <gdimarco@panynj.gov>
Subject: Phone call: Regina Egea (Redacted)
Tab 21
Yes. Wish it included a photo of the exhibit

Nicole P. Crifo
Senior Counsel
Authorities Unit
Office of the Governor
o. 609.777.2481

From: Regina Egea
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2013 10:50 AM
To: Nicole Crifo
Subject: FW: BLOG ALERT: Politicker NJ: Baroni: Port Authority could have handled lane closures better

Do you get these? On point

From: Sarah Dolan
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2013 10:47 AM
To: Sarah Dolan
Subject: BLOG ALERT: Politicker NJ: Baroni: Port Authority could have handled lane closures better

Baroni: Port Authority could have handled lane closures better
Bill Mooney
Politicker NJ

For four days in early September, Fort Lee turned into Fort Chaos as lanes to the George Washington Bridge were closed — ostensibly for traffic studies — but in reality for reasons lawmakers say were shrouded in politics.

Former Sen. Bill Baroni, deputy executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, one of four Authority officials invited to appear Monday before the Assembly Transportation Committee and answer for the bi-state commission’s conduct, showed up.

Chair John Wisniewski, (D-19), Sayreville, a frequent critic of the agency, was none too pleased with the circumstances of the closures, including the lack of notice to officials.

Baroni spent time explaining to the panel today about the daily 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. practice of dedicating three lanes to Fort Lee traffic in order to help alleviate the traffic delays overall.

"The Port Authority is very sensitive to the effect" of the impact on municipalities regarding traffic on the world’s busiest bridge, he said.

Regarding the snafu two months ago, according to Baroni, the Authority’s director of Interstate Capital Projects, David Wildstein, decided on Sept. 5 to begin a traffic study on Sept. 9 following consultations with Authority officials, including police and engineering staff.

Part of the goal was to determine what effect was being felt by the 95 percent of non-Fort Lee commuters, but he admitted it was not handled properly.
Baroni gave a mea culpa to the committee, admitting there should have been more openness and transparency for officials and the commuting public.

Two weeks' notice to towns, for example, will be just one of the changes implemented going forward, Baroni said.

"The Port Authority has learned a valuable lesson," from the events of September 2013, he said.
Tab 22

Nicole P. Crifo  
Senior Counsel | Authorities Unit  
Office of the Governor | New Jersey State House  
125 West State Street | Trenton, New Jersey 08625  
o. 609.777.2481 | e. nicole.crifo@gov.state.nj.us  
c. [REDACTED] | tf. 609.777.1250

Nicole P. Crifo
Senior Counsel | Authorities Unit
Office of the Governor | New Jersey State House
125 West State Street | Trenton, New Jersey 08625
o. 609.777.2481 | e. nicole.crifo@gov.state.nj.us
c. | f. 609.777.1250
Tab 24
We have pending requests for comment from Steve Strunsky of the Star Ledger, Ted Mann of the Wall Street Journal, Bill Moone of PolitickerNJ.com and Michael Phillips of the Bergen Record on the assemblyman’s press release. I’m not returning the calls unless...

News frc

Assemblyman Wisniewski

For Release:
Nov. 27, 2013

Assemblyman John S. Wisniewski
Deputy Speaker
Assembly Transportation Chair
p: 732-432-
e: AsmWisniewski@njleg.gov
www.assemblydems.com

Wisniewski Subpoenas Port Authority of NY & NJ Executive Director

George Washington Bridge Lane Closures
Compels PANYNJ Chief to Appear at Special Dec. 9 Hearing in Trenton

(TRENTON) — Assembly Deputy Speaker John Wisniewski on Wednesday subpoenaed the Port Authority of New York executive director to attend a special December hearing on the agency’s decision to close lanes to the George Washington Bridge. Wisniewski (D-Middlesex), the Assembly transportation committee chairman, ordered Patrick Foye, the authority’s deputy director, to appear at a special Dec. 9 hearing in Trenton.

The subpoena comes after the authority’s deputy director, Bill Baroni, refused on Monday to directly answer any continuous questions or the lane closures and provide data to support his testimony.

“Mr. Baroni’s unprofessional testimony created many more unanswered questions,” said Wisniewski (D-Middlesex). “Legislature to understand the circumstances surrounding these lane closures, as the impact on emergency services from notification could have resulted in the loss of life. It’s also now more than two months after the closure and no clear and convincing have been forthcoming on how this decision was made and why it was suddenly necessary.”

Foye is ordered to appear for the 10 a.m., Dec. 9 hearing at the State House and produce documents, correspondence and other writings requested by the panel.

“The committee has a responsibility to its constituents to obtain answers to these questions and ensure that prote
guarantee such an event will not happen again,” Wisniewski said. “We need to know whether this was incompetence or politic appointees. A more public and thorough discussion of these issues is necessary, and I look forward to Mr. Foye’s input.”

Under the subpoena, Foye is compelled to appear to testify and asked to produce:

- All documents and correspondence, produced between Jan. 1, 2013 and the present date between Gov. Chris Christie or City administration and/or any employee, officer, or executive of the Port Authority, concerning the decision to reduce from three to Fort Lee, New Jersey access lanes to the George Washington Bridge from Sept. 9, 2013 through Sept. 13, 2013;
- All documents and correspondence, produced between Jan. 1, 2013 and the present date, between and among employees, officers of the Port Authority, including any documents and correspondence sent or received by David Wildstein, Director of Interstate Capital, concerning the decision to reduce from three to one, the eastbound Fort Lee, New Jersey access lanes to the George Washington Bridge from Sept. 9, 2013 through Sept. 13, 2013;
- All documents and correspondence referenced and cited to by Baroni at Monday’s Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Authorities Committee meeting, including, but not limited to, any traffic count, traffic report, or traffic study, produced by any employee of the Port Authority or any third party working on behalf of any employee, executive, or officer of the Port Authority related to the decision to reduce from three to one, the eastbound Fort Lee, New Jersey access lanes to the George Washington Bridge from Sept. 9, 2013 through Sept. 13, 2013;
- All documents and correspondence supporting Mr. Baroni’s assertion at the Monday New Jersey Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Authorities Committee meeting that: (a) on Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2013 the General Manager of the George Washington Bridge noted a reduction in travel time for commuters using the I-95 approach to the George Washington Bridge and a three minute reduction in travel time for commuters using local road approaches to the George Washington Bridge; (b) on Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013 the General Manager of the George Washington Bridge noted a reduction in travel time for commuters using the I-95 approach and the local road approaches to the George Washington Bridge; and (c) 105,000 regular EZ-Pass users cross the George Washington Bridge each morning and 4,839 of those users are from New Jersey;
- Copies of all rules, regulations, or written policies of the Port Authority concerning the process for closing access lanes to the George Washington Bridge. Copies of all rules, regulations, or written policies of the Port Authority concerning the process for approving and conducting lane traffic studies; and
- All information concerning the impact on toll collections or any other economic impact to the Port Authority or the New York Metropolitan Region resulting from the decision to reduce from three to one, the eastbound Fort Lee, New Jersey access lanes to the George Washington Bridge from Sept. 9, 2013 through Sept. 13, 2013.

Nicole P. Crifo
Senior Counsel | Authorities Unit
Office of the Governor | New Jersey State House
125 West State Street | Trenton, New Jersey 08625
o. 609.777.2481 | e. nicole.crifo@gov.state.nj.us
f. 609.777.1250
SCHEDULE A
(to Subpoena dated November 27, 2013, issued by
the Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Independent Authorities Committee.)

For the purposes of this schedule, "employee, officer, or executive" of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey ("Port Authority") shall include, but not be limited to: the Executive Director, Patrick Foye; Deputy Executive Director, Bill Baroni; Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, David Samson; Director of Interstate Capital Projects, David Wildstein; any current or former member of the Board of Commissioners; any employee or other staff of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; or any individual acting on behalf of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

The terms "document," "documents," and "correspondence" include hard copy documents and correspondence as well as electronic mail transmissions and electronically stored data, documents, correspondence, and other pertinent data compiled or collected. Attachments, exhibits, and enclosures are included as well.

In addition, please produce a log of any documents and/or correspondence withheld from production on the basis of any claimed privilege or protection, and retain such documents and/or correspondence.

Please deliver the following documents and correspondence:

1. All documents and correspondence, produced between January 1, 2013 and the present date between Governor Chris Christie or any member of his administration and/or any employee, officer, or executive of the Port Authority, concerning the decision to reduce from three to one, the eastbound Fort Lee, New Jersey access lanes to the George Washington Bridge from September 9, 2013 through September 13, 2013;

2. All documents and correspondence, produced between January 1, 2013 and the present date, between and among employees, executives, or officers of the Port Authority, including any documents and correspondence sent or received by David Wildstein, Director of Interstate Capital Projects concerning the decision to reduce from three to one, the eastbound Fort Lee, New Jersey access lanes to the George Washington Bridge from September 9, 2013 through September 13, 2013;

3. All documents and correspondence referenced and cited to by Bill Baroni, Deputy Executive Director, at the November 25, 2013 New Jersey Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Independent Authorities Committee meeting, including, but not limited to, any traffic count, traffic report, or traffic study, produced by any employee, executive, or officer of the Port Authority or any third party working on behalf of any employee, executive, or officer of the Port Authority related to the decision to reduce from three to one, the eastbound Fort Lee, New Jersey access lanes to the George Washington Bridge from September 9, 2013 through September 13, 2013;

OGNJ-LEG-013747
4. All documents and correspondence supporting Mr. Baroni's assertion at the November 25, 2013 New Jersey Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Independent Authorities Committee meeting that: (a) on Tuesday, September 10, 2013 the General Manager of the George Washington Bridge noted a four minute reduction in travel time for commuters using the I-95 approach to the George Washington Bridge and a three minute reduction in travel time for commuters using local road approaches to the George Washington Bridge; (b) on Wednesday, September 11, 2013 the General Manager of the George Washington Bridge noted a reduction in travel time for commuters using the I-95 approach and the local road approaches to the George Washington Bridge; and (c) 105,000 regular EZ-Pass users cross the George Washington Bridge each morning and 4,839 of those users are from Fort Lee, New Jersey;

5. Copies of all rules, regulations, or written policies of the Port Authority concerning the process for closing access lanes to the George Washington Bridge. Copies of all rules, regulations, or written policies of the Port Authority concerning the process for approving and conducting traffic studies, including, but not limited to any rules, regulations, or written policies concerning public and law enforcement notification of lane closures in relation to traffic studies; and

6. All information concerning the impact on toll collections or any other economic impact to the Port Authority or the New York, New Jersey Metropolitan Region resulting from the decision to reduce from three to one, the eastbound Fort Lee, New Jersey access lanes to the George Washington Bridge from September 9, 2013 through September 13, 2013.
ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION, PUBLIC WORKS AND INDEPENDENT AUTHORITIES COMMITTEE
SUBPOENA

TO: Patrick Foye, Executive Director
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
225 Park Avenue South, 15th Floor
New York, New York 10003

WE COMMAND YOU, That, laying aside all and singular business and excuses, you personally attend and appear before the Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Independent Authorities Committee, constituted as a special committee of the General Assembly pursuant to Assembly Resolution (duly passed by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey on February 14, 2013), on December 9, 2013 at 10 o’clock a.m., in Committee Room 11, 4th floor, State House Annex, Trenton, New Jersey, to testify to certain matters relevant to the committee’s inquiry and investigation into the finances of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and any other matters related thereto that the committee determines to be necessary for its purposes, and to produce to the committee at that time all documents, correspondence, books, papers and other writings that you have access to relevant to the committee’s inquiry and investigation as more particularly set forth on the attached Schedule A.

Your appearance is governed by the Code of Fair Procedure and Chapter 13 of Title 52 of the Revised Statutes. A copy of the Code of Fair Procedure is delivered to you herewith. You shall appear and remain in attendance subject to the direction of the committee.

Failure to comply with this Subpoena shall make you liable for such penalties as are provided by law.

WITNESS, the hand of The Honorable John S. Wisniewski, Chairman of the Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Independent Authorities Committee, on this 27th day of November, 2013.

[Signature]
John S. Wisniewski, Chairman
Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Independent Authorities Committee
November 27, 2013

Mr. Patrick Foye, Executive Director
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
225 Park Avenue South, 15th Floor
New York, New York 10003

Dear Executive Director Foye:

Please find attached hereto a subpoena concerning your appearance, testimony, and production of relevant records at a meeting of the Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Independent Authorities Committee (committee) concerning the committee’s investigation of the finances of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. The meeting will be held on December 9, 2013, at 10:00 a.m., in Committee Room 11, 4th floor, State House Annex, Trenton, New Jersey. This meeting will be recorded by the Hearing Reporter Unit of the Office of Legislative Services. We also enclose herewith a copy of the Code of Fair Procedure.

We look forward to your anticipated cooperation in this matter. If you have questions in this matter, please contact Charles A. Buono, Jr. at 609-847-3840.

Very truly yours,

ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION, PUBLIC WORKS
AND INDEPENDENT AUTHORITIES COMMITTEE

John S. Wisniewski,
Chairman

JW/cab
Enclosures

c Members – Assembly Transportation, Public Works and Independent Authorities Committee
Jillian Dempsey, Assembly Majority Office
Glen Beebe, Assembly Republican Office
Charles A. Buono, Jr., Office of Legislative Services
Tab 25
Tab 26
The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey’s Inspector General formally launched an investigation Tuesday into the closure of several local lanes at the George Washington Bridge in September, which caused major traffic jams. The investigation was confirmed by Michael Nestor, the office’s director of investigations. And New Jersey state lawmakers are weighing their next step into their investigation into the closures, one day after the Port Authority’s executive director undercut the agency’s official explanation for the traffic jams. The options for the lawmakers could include new subpoenas for appointees of New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who would once again try to explain what happened, this time under oath.

Monday’s sworn testimony from Patrick Foye, the authority’s executive director, contradicted voluntary testimony given to the New Jersey Assembly Transportation Committee by another authority official on a key point: whether a traffic study was really the reason lanes were abruptly shifted on the world’s busiest bridge. Bill Baroni, the deputy executive director and a top appointee of Mr. Christie, had doubled down on that explanation in an appearance before the committee last month. Mr. Baroni said then that David Wildstein, his subordinate and another official with close ties to the governor, gave the order to close two of three local access lanes from Fort Lee, N.J., onto the bridge so the authority could make a decision about the fairness of dedicating toll plaza lanes to local traffic. But people familiar with the matter had long cast doubt on that explanation, and on Monday Mr. Foye, the top appointee of Gov. Andrew Cuomo, said it wasn’t true. “I’m not aware of any traffic study, Mr. Foye told the committee. “I don’t know why it was done.” Democratic lawmakers have suggested the lane closures were a gesture aimed at Fort Lee, which was beset by traffic due to the lane closures, and where the borough’s Democratic mayor had declined to endorse Mr. Christie’s reelection. A Christie spokesman has called that notion “crazy.” One day after the hearing, the incident received new national attention. Fresh off an appearance on Rachel Maddow’s MSNBC show to discuss the matter, Assemblyman John Wisniewski said he was “not ruling anything out and not ruling anything in.” Mr. Wisniewski is chairman of the transportation committee, and a former chairman of the state Democratic Party who has tangled with the Christie administration and the authority. Mr. Wisniewski said he wants to “take a look at the transcripts from both hearings and figure out where the holes are in the testimony, and what jumps out from those gaps.” One of the biggest causes for concern, Mr. Wisniewski said, is Mr. Baroni’s contention that he knew about Mr. Wildstein’s plan to close the local lanes “a full week before the executive director did.” “I’ve got to be honest with you there’s something wrong with this story,” Mr. Wisniewski said. “That’s something that speaks to an institutional problem at the Port Authority.” Mr. Wildstein resigned last week, effective Jan. 1, and Mr. Wisniewski and Democratic colleagues have said Mr. Baroni too should resign. A spokesman for Mr. Christie didn’t respond when asked if the governor was confident in the accuracy of Mr. Baroni’s testimony, or whether he believed Mr. Baroni should consider resigning. Messrs. Baroni, Wildstein, and Foye didn’t respond to requests for comment relayed by an authority press officer on Tuesday.