

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE: July 10, 1998

Governor's Weekly Radio Message Addresses the Need for Safe Roads, Bridges and Buses

Gov. Christie Whitman provides a weekly radio message to radio stations throughout the state. Each week, the message focuses on a different concern or event of interest to New Jerseyans.

This week the Governor discussed her plan to provide a stable source of funding for the Transportation Trust Fund. She said that New Jersey needs to fix its crumbling roads, dangerous intersections and broken railroad tracks, but the fund for these repairs is running out. The Governor's plan is to ask voters in November to approve a four-cent increase in the gas tax to provide a source of funding for the necessary repairs. She urges citizens to contact their legislators now, before a critical vote on this issue later in the month, to let them know New Jerseyans want safe bridges, buses and railroads.

Attached is the text of the message.

The radio message can be accessed by calling the Governor's actuality line at 609-292-3249. It will be available today, beginning at 3 p.m., and will run through the weekend.

Governor's Weekly Radio Message Transportation Trust Fund July 10, 1998

Here in the Garden State we take great pride in our expansive transportation network. If you want to get from point A to point B in New Jersey, you're sure to find a sure and speedy way to get there. But you may not find your route to be as safe as you'd like.

That's what I want to speak with you about today: keeping our transportation infrastructure top notch, putting safety first and, in the process, providing more jobs for our workers.

Our transportation statistics speak for themselves.

Today, one out of every three of our bridges is structurally deficient.

Two out of five New Jersey Transit buses on the road today should be retired. Others should be replaced immediately.

And the fund our state uses to fix crumbling roads, dangerous intersections, and broken railroad tracks is running out - without enough money to make scores of desperately needed improvements.

Without new funding, we will fall further behind. More bridges will weaken. More roads will crumble. We won't be able to upgrade mass transit or contain sprawl, making traffic jams worse and accidents more frequent.

To put it bluntly, without this funding we're putting our infrastructure and our safety at risk.

Here's my plan: first, I'm proposing that this November we ask you - the voters of New Jersey - to approve a four-cent increase in the gas tax - phased in over three years. These funds will give us a stable source of funding for transportation. This proposal is vital to our transportation needs in New Jersey and critical to our having safe roads, bridges, buses and trains.

This November, you will get to decide the future of our transportation system.

You will decide if we should raise the gas tax just a few pennies over three years and keep our transportation network tops in the country.

You will decide if we will put tens of thousands more workers on the job in keeping our transportation system strong.

And you will determine if our future is one of reliable, safe roads - not just a transportation system that can get you from points A to B, but one that will get you there in one piece.

These are weighty matters, and they matter a lot for New Jersey's future. I ask each of you who are taking 5 minutes to listen to this radio message to take just another five minutes to contact your legislator.

There's a crucial vote on the Transportation Trust Fund coming up later this month. Write or call your legislators to make sure this reaches the ballot this year. Let them

know that you care about safe roads and bridges and reliable buses and railroads. Let them know that you won't settle for second best when it comes to safety.

Tell them you want a chance to vote "Yes" for all these things. "Yes" for the Transportation Trust Fund. "Yes" for restoring our transportation infrastructure. "Yes" for safety. "Yes" for jobs.

Tell them you want them to leave the decision up to you. You deserve to be heard.