

Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Highlights Fiscal Year 2024 Boardwalk Preservation Fund Ahead of Memorial Day Weekend

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*Boardwalk Fund Program Has Provided \$100 Million for Critical Investment in Boardwalk Infrastructure Along the Jersey Shore*

**ASBURY PARK** – Kicking off Memorial Day Weekend, Governor Phil Murphy today visited the Asbury Park Boardwalk to highlight the Boardwalk Preservation Fund program from the Governor's Fiscal Year 2024 Budget. Last year, the Governor signed bipartisan legislation S3989/A5675 to establish the Boardwalk Preservation Fund, appropriating \$100 million of American Rescue Plan Act funding for Jersey Shore communities to strengthen boardwalk infrastructure.

Designed to enhance the local economies of New Jersey's shore communities, these funds will help repair facilities and make improvements to centers of community life in nearly 20 towns and cities. In Asbury Park, Boardwalk Preservation Fund dollars will be utilized to provide new restroom facilities and accessibility upgrades for boardwalk users, and to restore and renovate Convention Hall and the Paramount Theatre.

"Boardwalks are the lifeblood of communities up and down the Shore as they connect shoppers to small businesses and bring families and friends together," **said Governor Murphy**. "Last year, we proudly launched the \$100 million Boardwalk Preservation Fund to ensure that these historic attractions can receive the maintenance they need to remain resilient for generations to come. With this critical funding, New Jersey's iconic wooden main streets will continue serving as the backdrop for summers down the Shore."

In August 2023, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Office of Disaster Recovery and Mitigation, issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to shore municipalities. To ensure that the Boardwalk Preservation Fund addresses the most critical and necessary capital needs along the Shore, the DCA prioritized funding to shore municipalities facing financial distress and to projects that rehabilitate or improve the resilience of existing structures. Using environmentally friendly and state-of-the-art materials for these projects is a critical component to secure safer, longer lasting, and more resilient boardwalk infrastructure. Projects that add new boardwalks or allied amenities, such as recreation areas, services, or retail facilities, were also eligible for funding.

"The Boardwalk Preservation Fund is helping our shore communities maintain, repair, and strengthen our boardwalks so they can remain places of joy and inspiration for future generations," **said DCA Commissioner Jacquelyn A. Suárez**. "DCA is proud to have awarded the boardwalk grants to municipalities earlier this year, and we look forward to the resiliency, safety, and access improvements that will result from the funding."

"Our boardwalks are American icons that so many people recall from memories of the Jersey Shore with family and friends," **said Congressman Frank Pallone**. "I'm glad to see federal funding from the American Rescue Plan will help preserve boardwalks up and down the Shore so new memories can be made. Boardwalks create the uniquely quintessential character we associate with summertime and bolster small businesses we love. I'm glad that we will be able to revitalize boardwalks for everyone who lives here and all those who visit the Jersey Shore for years to come, and I applaud Governor Murphy for taking action to support our state's coastal communities."

Primary sponsors of the bipartisan legislation establishing the Boardwalk Preservation Fund include include Senator Paul Sarlo, Senator Michael Testa, Assemblyman Louis D. Greenwald, and Assemblyman William Moen; co-sponsors include Senator Vin Gopal and Senator Vince Polistina.

"There is no better time to recognize the historic, cultural and economic significance that the Jersey Shore holds for our state than on Memorial Day Weekend, which marks the traditional Shore "season," and the unofficial beginning of Summer," **said Senator Paul Sarlo**, primary sponsor of legislation establishing The Boardwalk Preservation Fund. "This fund is a reminder of that significance, which has been carried down from family to family, from generation to generation, for many decades. This ongoing investment in our Shore communities provides a mark of commitment and one that will keep the fond memories of our Shore experiences alive."

"The Boardwalk Preservation Fund is a transformative grant initiative dedicated to restoring and repairing our iconic Jersey Shore boardwalks, which are the historical, recreational, and economic engine of our shore communities. This program is making historic investments that are long overdue," **said Senator Michael Testa**. "These capital improvements will enhance the tourist appeal and generate millions in revenue for local businesses and the State. Most importantly, this fund ensures that our shore town communities can preserve the historical significance of these structures for future generations to enjoy." We extend our gratitude to Governor Murphy for supporting this vital initiative."

"I have had the honor and privilege for years now of representing our Shore towns – along with the people and businesses who call this region home – in the State Legislature. I see firsthand how hard our communities and merchants work to preserve the Shore and its boardwalks and traditions, in order to host residents from all over our state, and keep families coming back for generations," **said Senator Vin Gopal**. "The Boardwalk Fund will continue to provide a lasting boost to local merchants and shops, as well as to the hospitality industry, and to undergird the Shore economy and keep it vibrant for decades to come."

"Millions of people from all over the world travel to enjoy our historic boardwalks and beaches. The Boardwalk Preservation Fund is making significant investments into our shore town communities which are the lifeblood of our tourism industry and an economic driver for the entire State," **said Senator Vince Polistina**. "By making these necessary boardwalk improvements we're preserving popular tourist destinations and ensuring the long-term economic success of the New Jersey Shore."

Over the years, coastal towns have provided New Jerseyans with endless treasured memories. The support from the Boardwalk Preservation Fund is a testament of the value and significance of these iconic structures," **said Majority Leader Louis D. Greenwald**. "By undertaking the repair, reconstruction or expansion of boardwalks across these shore towns, we can enrich the lives of many permanent residents and entice more people to come and experience the beauty of the Jersey Shore."

"This infusion of funds will breathe new life into New Jersey boardwalks, and will be a game-changer for our tourist industry, attracting more visitors and bringing a fresh wave of excitement to the communities," **said Assemblyman Bill Moen**, who chairs the Assembly Committee on Tourism, Gaming and the Arts. "For decades, families in New Jersey have crafted invaluable memories across the state's legendary boardwalks and by taking on the task of repairing them, we can guarantee that future generations can forge their own cherished memories."

"The Shore tourism industry is an integral part of our coastal economy, and our tourism revolves around the boardwalks," **said Assemblywoman Dr. Margie Donlon**, member of the Assembly Tourism, Gaming & the Arts Committee. "From our beaches to ice cream shops to restaurants, there is something for everyone to enjoy at the boardwalk this Memorial Day Weekend. The Boardwalk Fund has been integral to strengthening our boardwalk infrastructure to lessen storm damage and increase accessibility to reduce interruptions to boardwalk businesses caused by storms."

"Memorial Day Weekend brings families from near and far to the Jersey shore. Our boardwalks are integral to connecting our beach-goers to local businesses and making our communities walkable," **said Assemblywoman Luanne Peterpaul**, who learned to walk on the Long Branch Boardwalk. "Boardwalks are incredibly expensive to maintain, and local property taxpayers footing the costs of storm damage. The investments through the Boardwalk Fund are bringing much needed structural and safety improvements to our

boardwalks.”

“Memorial Day Weekend at the shore marks the start of summer – a critical time for the local economy in Asbury Park,” **said Asbury Park Mayor John Moor**. “The Boardwalk Preservation Fund will be transformative for Asbury Park’s boardwalks, which attract thousands of visitors each summer. Thank you to Governor Murphy and the Legislature for investing in our boardwalks, which are home to many memories at the shore for families across the state.”

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