

## Office of the Governor

### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **GOVERNOR VISITS DEFICIENT BRIDGE IN SALEM COUNTY; HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS**

Gov. Christie Whitman today visited the structurally deficient New Bridge Road Bridge in Lower Alloways Township to highlight the need for renewal of the Transportation Trust Fund for bridge replacement and other transportation improvements throughout the state.

The Governor has proposed that voters be given an opportunity to vote in November on whether to phase-in over three years a four-cent per gallon increase in the gas tax to increase revenues in the TTF.

"What must have been a fine bridge in the early 1900s when it was built, has now become another sad statistic about the state of too many of New Jersey's roads and bridges," the Governor said. "Too many of our bridges and roads are deteriorating and becoming safety risks."

"We need to do something and we need to do it soon," she said. "If we continue on the present course, we're going to find ourselves reaching a lot more bridges that aren't safe to cross, and a lot more roads that aren't safe to travel."

"Today, one out of every three of our bridges is structurally deficient," Governor Whitman said. "Two out of five New Jersey Transit buses on the road today should be retired and 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," the Governor said. "Without new funding, bridges like this will stay too unsafe to travel. Roads will deteriorate or pose safety hazards. Buses and trains won't run."

The Governor said renewal of the TTF would put tens of thousands more workers on the job and keep New Jersey's transportation network the tops in the country.

The New Bridge Road Bridge, which spans Alloways Creek, was constructed in 1905 and is considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The bridge, which is 15-feet-wide and 150-feet long, was originally a swing span bridge, but due to alterations in 1975 the movable portion of the bridge was fixed in a closed position and it cannot be opened. It is considered deficient and in need of replacement because of structural problems and because its narrow width cannot accommodate larger vehicles, including some fire fighting equipment and farm vehicles.

The bridge is one of three routes that could be used as evacuation routes for the Salem Nuclear Generating Station on nearby Artificial Island.

The project is in the preliminary engineering/alternative analysis phase. Salem County officials anticipate completing and design phase and beginning construction of a new span within two to three years. The State Department of Transportation estimates that engineering costs will total approximately \$1 million and construction costs will total about \$10 million.