

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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PLAN TO SEEK VOTER APPROVAL ON FUNDING FOR TRANSPORTATION AND OPEN LAND PRESERVATION GETS STRONG SUPPORT FROM BROAD- BASED NJ COALITION

Gov. Christie Whitman announced today that Lawrence R. Codey, Chief Operating Officer of Public Service Electric & Gas, will serve as chairman of the Coalition for a Better New Jersey.

Gov. Christie Whitman was joined by members of the broad-based Coalition for a Better New Jersey in Trenton to focus on the urgent need to upgrade the state's aging transportation infrastructure and preserve the state's rapidly declining parkland, farmland and natural resources.

"I am very pleased that Larry Codey has agreed to head up this effort, which is so important to the health, safety, and future of all New Jerseyans," said Gov. Whitman.

The coalition, which is comprised of business, labor, environmental and land conservation groups, is working to promote timely legislative approval of the Governor's proposal for a November ballot question to fund highway and public transit improvements and open space preservation.

"These New Jersey leaders have come to Trenton today to stand with me because they know that we need safer roads, sturdier bridges, and more access to mass transit," said Gov. Whitman. "They know how critical it is to save more open space and farmland. And they agree that we must invest now for a better New Jersey."

"I see a direct link between preserving open space and improving the condition of our infrastructure, and I think New Jersey voters will agree. We lose 10,000 acres or more each year to development. Every acre that is developed places more pressure on our infrastructure with more traffic and greater demands on our roads and bridges," said the Governor.

"I welcome the Coalition for a Better New Jersey's leadership in making certain the voters have the opportunity to approve our proposal this November," said Gov. Whitman. "New Jersey voters have a proud tradition of valuing preservation and transportation. They certainly deserve the chance to decide whether seven cents makes good sense for an even better New Jersey."

Gov. Whitman has developed her "NJ First" plan to reauthorize the Transportation Trust Fund and invest \$30 billion in urgently-needed transportation improvements and expansions. NJ First will help repair New Jersey's crumbling roads and bridges, ease congestion and ensure safe and efficient transportation for New Jersey commuters.

Gov. Whitman pledged during her inaugural address to preserve 300,000 acres of open space and farmland during her second term and 1 million acres over the next decade to help protect the Garden State's exceptional quality of life for generations to come.

The Governor has proposed that New Jersey voters be given the opportunity in November to dedicate funds from a seven-cent increase in the gasoline tax exclusively for transportation improvements and open space preservation.

Five of the seven cents would be dedicated to fund transportation projects and two cents would be used to save open space. After ten years, the dedication for open space preservation would revert to support transportation projects.

The Coalition for a Better New Jersey ardently supports the Governor's proposal to place a question on the November ballot giving voters the opportunity to support funding for transportation improvement and open space preservation projects.

Members of the Coalition include:

- New Jersey Alliance for Action
- NJ Nature Conservancy
- NJ Laborers'-Employers' Cooperation and Education Trust
- Stockton Alliance
- Hon. Robert Roe, former congressman
- New Jersey Farm Bureau
- New Jersey Association of Rail Passengers
- Utility and Transportation Contractors Association
- Associated General Contractors of New Jersey
- Michael Barrett, Former Deputy Commissioner, NJ DOT, former county engineer
- Building Contractors of New Jersey
- Committee for a Smart New Jersey

New Jersey Motor Truck Association
Construction and General Laborers Local 172
Heavy and General Laborers Local 472
New Jersey Future
Consulting Engineers Council of New Jersey
Ironworkers Local 11
Laborers International Union of North America
New Jersey State Council of Carpenters
New Jersey Asphalt Pavement Association
Operating Engineers Local 825
Southern New Jersey Development Council