

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor's Weekly Radio Address Focuses on Better Transportation and More Open Space and Farmland

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.

Gov. Whitman's message this week focuses on her plan to provide a stable source of funding for the Transportation Trust Fund and for the preservation of open space and farmland. With funding for our state's transportation network, New Jersey can fix its crumbling roads, dangerous intersections and broken railroad tracks. The Governor's plan is to ask voters in November to approve a four-cent increase in the gas tax over the next three years to provide a stable source of funding for the necessary repairs. The Governor also stressed the importance of open space and farmland to the quality of life in New Jersey. New Jersey's citizens need and want clean water, clean air and open places. She urges citizens to contact their legislators now to tell them to vote "yes" to the Transportation Trust Fund and "yes" on the open space proposal.

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 noon, and will run through the weekend.

Governor's Weekly Radio Message Transportation Trust Fund and Open Space/Farmland Preservation July 24, 1998

Here in New Jersey, we all understand the importance of maintaining an effective and efficient transportation system. In fact, it is crucial to the well-being of our state and our citizens.

By now, you may have heard about my proposal to overhaul our state's transportation network. In November, I want to ask you - the voters of New Jersey -- to dedicate a new, stable funding source to make transportation improvements that will give New Jersey citizens a stronger economy, safer roads, and better commuter choices.

We will fix the 25 most congested spots in the state and repair structurally deficient bridges.

To improve mass transit and ease traffic, we will replace buses and build new rail lines.

In the process, this initiative will provide the solid, good-paying jobs that highway design and construction provide. And we will have more money for local projects that can spark economic development.

The stable source of funding that I have proposed will phase in, over 3 years, a 4 cent increase in the gas tax. And, I should point out, a significant part of the cost of maintaining New Jersey's roads will be paid by out-of-state drivers.

There is an important vote on the Transportation Trust Fund coming up in the Legislature only days from now. There is a strong consensus for this important transportation project and no reason it shouldn't happen. New Jersey needs it - and it is not just about repairing roads and bridges -- it's about thoughtful investment in our state's infrastructure. And I hope that with your support the Legislature will move to put this proposal on November's ballot for the voters to decide.

I also hope to have your support for another proposal facing a vote in the Legislature in the next few days - preserving one million acres of open space and

farmland.

So much of the beauty New Jersey offers can only remain through the preservation of our natural resources. That is one reason I'm working so hard with the Legislature to find a stable source of funding for open space and farmland preservation.

The open space initiative will ensure that our children and grandchildren will still have woods to hike through, clean streams to swim in, and fish to catch. It will also ensure the viability of our farming industry, which is such a vital part of our state's character.

I feel so strongly about making sure that the open space initiative gets passed that this week, for the first time in my tenure, I testified before the Legislature.

I urge all of you, who appreciate the importance of open space and efficient transportation to the quality of life in our state, please get involved in supporting these proposals.

You deserve the chance to vote on these vital programs this year. I ask you, to take just five minutes to contact your legislators. Tell them to vote "yes" on the Transportation Trust Fund and "yes" on the open space proposal.

As I say this, I am confident that you will cast a "yes" vote of your own this fall.

I'm pleased to report that well over 100 municipal bodies have passed resolutions in support of our transportation and open space proposal. Those endorsements echo the positive response I've heard from people around the state.

People all over New Jersey recognize the environmental and economic benefits of the open space initiative. And they recognize the good sense of further investment in our highways and bridges. Let's work together to support these two initiatives that are crucial to our quality of life in New Jersey.
