

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Workplace Reform Initiative for State Government

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To Ensure Equity for Employees, Government Training and Reporting Processes to be Thoroughly Evaluated and Reimagined

TRENTON – As part of the commitment Governor Phil Murphy made during his State of the State address in January to changing the culture of Trenton and promoting equity for all employees, the Governor today announced that the State of New Jersey will be reevaluating current workplace standards and trainings. The aim of this initiative is to ensure the broadest scope of workplace protections possible for the broadest number of state employees, with the end goal of ensuring inclusion and equity for all regardless of sex, race, or gender identity.

“As I have said previously, I am committed to making real, positive, and long-lasting changes to address the culture in Trenton, particularly around reports of the unacceptable treatment of women,” **said Governor Murphy**. “I have said time and time again that my goal is to make New Jersey stronger and fairer for everyone. Make no mistake: I believe that a more respectful culture for women in our state is a moral imperative. Getting to the root causes and dismantling a system that has existed for far too long won't be easy, but today's announcement is the most recent example of my Administration taking meaningful steps in the right direction.”

“I have spent the entirety of my career in public service working to support the intrinsic dignity of all people, including in the workplace. People should be able to make a living and engage in meaningful work without being harassed or disrespected because of their race, gender, creed, nationality, or religion. That is why I stand with Governor Murphy on this important workplace reform initiative,” **said Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver**. “While this initiative is for state government, it is my hope that the protections and training we put in place extend beyond state agencies and inspire meaningful change at workplaces throughout New Jersey.”

The State is currently in the process of identifying an expert partner in the field of labor to assess the current systems and procedures and make recommendations on how to move forward. That partner will work with labor unions, other experts, and interested parties in the field and will be tasked with the following:

- Conducting a thorough review of current training for employees and making recommendations on how to improve that training;
- Conducting a comprehensive evaluation of what steps are presently taken in state government to prevent sexual harassment or workplace issues and determine where systems work and fail and for what reasons;
- Developing new, more robust and thorough trainings through a lens of equity and inclusion that focus on challenging custom, habit, and implicit bias;
- Developing constructive training on how to build equity-based work environments, not simply trainings that deal with managing an issue after the fact.

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Governor Murphy is also committed to the following:

- Investing the time and resources to do in person and interactive training for state employees;
- Providing the opportunity to more people in government to become trainers, ensuring that everyone has equal access to a seat at the table;
- Measuring outcomes and reaching for specific benchmarks to ensure that this work is done thoughtfully and in an accountable way.

“While we have made progress, I recognize that our state has a long way to go,” **Governor Murphy continued.** “I will embrace and take every action necessary to ensure that work environments are fully characterized by mutual respect and dignity and I will ensure they are places where everyone can succeed. New Jersey can and must be a national model on this and I will not rest until that goal is achieved.”

Since taking office, Governor Murphy has enacted a substantial portfolio of initiatives aimed at promoting equity. He has signed legislation creating resources for victims of harassment and discrimination, bills to change how these situations are handled in government, and legislation prohibiting non-disclosure provisions relating to claims of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. Governor Murphy also knows broader economic and racial issues contribute to long-term inequity. To combat that, he has expanded paid family leave, established universal paid sick leave, restored critical funding for women's health, and signed legislation requiring equal pay for equal work.

Measure Brings the Project a Step Closer to Full Funding Grant Agreement for Replacement of 109-Year-Old Bridge

NEWARK — NJ TRANSIT is commending the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) decision to give an improved project rating to a proposed replacement of the Portal Bridge. The 109-year-old swing span over the Hackensack River, and its history of mechanical breakdowns, has long been a chokepoint for rail customers travelling the Northeast Corridor (NEC) between New Jersey and New York City.

“From day one, my administration has worked closely with our congressional delegation and Secretary Chao's team to enhance this critical project that cannot wait another day – we have committed the entirety of New Jersey's local share in the form of \$600 million in EDA bonds, completed critical early construction work and developed shovel-ready plans for major construction. Today's decision by USDOT puts us one step closer toward our ultimate goal; replacing this unreliable, century-old bridge and reducing delays for NJ TRANSIT customers,” **said New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy.** “New Jersey remains ready and willing to work cooperatively as a full partner to ensure that this project, which affects the commutes of tens of thousands of our residents daily, is completed as expeditiously as possible.”

“We are very thankful that the FTA has improved its rating of the critical Portal North Bridge project,” **said Amtrak Board Chair Tony Coscia.** “A new bridge will significantly increase reliability for the 200,000 daily Amtrak and NJ TRANSIT customers that cross the Hackensack River each day. We thank our partners at NJ TRANSIT for their leadership, FTA and DOT for their cooperation, and all of our federal and state champions in New Jersey, New York and across the country for their continued support as we look forward to progressing this critical element of the Gateway Program.”

“Any rail customer that commutes between New Jersey and New York City will attest to the importance of the reliability this bridge has on the quality of their daily lives,” **said New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner and NJ TRANSIT Chair Diane Gutierrez- Scaccetti.** “This antiquated bridge remains a single point of failure on the NEC, which makes its replacement a top priority. We're grateful that the USDOT recognizes how critical this link is to the economic viability of this region and look forward to getting construction underway as soon as possible.”

“We are extremely pleased with the USDOT's decision to advance the Portal North Project closer to a Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA). This critical project can't wait any longer as this nearly 110-year-old bridge is a frequent source for delays and frustration for our nearly 90,000 customers who travel to and from Penn

Station New York every day,” **said NJ TRANSIT President & CEO Kevin Corbett**. “We thank the USDOT, and our partners at the FTA and FRA, for their support of this shovel-ready project that will increase capacity and ensure reliability for the more than 450 NJ TRANSIT and Amtrak trains a day that cross the Portal Bridge.”

In September 2019, NJ TRANSIT, as the Project Sponsor in partnership with Amtrak, submitted a revised financial plan to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The revised plan was adjusted to reflect FTA and USDOT feedback on a previous submissions, making more local money available for the project while keeping costs in check. NJ TRANSIT and the state of New Jersey doubled the share of local funding toward the project, increasing the state’s contribution from \$300 million to \$600 million dollars.

Advancing the Portal North Bridge Project towards construction is critical to eliminating the major disruptions to train service on the NEC between Newark, New Jersey and New York Penn Station. The NEC is the busiest passenger rail line in the United States, and a long-term outage of the Portal Bridge over the Hackensack River would result in catastrophic delays from Boston to the nation’s capital.

Between NJ TRANSIT and Amtrak, more than 450 trains a day cross the current Portal Bridge carrying passengers making almost 200,000 daily trips. NJ TRANSIT alone carries approximately 90,000 customers (180,000 passenger trips) between New Jersey and New York City on an average weekday. The bridge regularly opens to allow for marine traffic to pass, and each opening causes delays on both lines. When the 109-year-old bridge fails to properly close, the delays cascade to affect tens of thousands of customers and their families.

The replacement Portal North Bridge is designed as a high-level, fixed span bridge that will allow marine traffic to pass underneath without interrupting rail traffic. The project is one hundred percent designed, fully permitted, and has seen early work completed on time and under budget. These successes make it especially well-positioned to begin construction to provide increased reliability and capacity to rail passengers throughout the region and nation in the near-term.

Once full construction begins, the remainder of the Portal North Bridge Project is estimated to take approximately five years.

Governor Phil Murphy

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