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## Governor Christie Marks Start Of Gateway Development With Portal Bridge Replacement Construction

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### ***\$30 Billion Gateway Program Will Improve Northeast Corridor Rail Safety, Capacity and Efficiency***

**Trenton, NJ** – Initiating the Gateway development program that will improve rail transportation between Newark and New York City, Governor Chris Christie today broke ground on the replacement of the Portal Bridge, a two-track 110-year-old swing span structure over the Hackensack River in Kearny and Secaucus, known for malfunctioning and causing delays on the busiest-in-the-nation Northeast Corridor.

“The replacement of the aging Portal Bridge is the first step toward ensuring a sound and efficient rail transportation system that will serve millions of riders now and well into the future,” said Governor Christie. “This project is vital to our economy and the safety of millions of local commuters and people from around the world who use mass transportation along the Northeast Corridor. By working cooperatively with New York and federal lawmakers and officials, we hope to identify funding for this and the Hudson River tunnel projects that is fair and equitable for New Jersey taxpayers.”

The Portal Bridge, built in 1907 and owned by Amtrak, is one of the heaviest trafficked railroad bridges in the Western Hemisphere. NJ TRANSIT carries approximately 150,000 passengers per day on almost 400 trains. Amtrak transports about 16,000 passengers per day on more than 100 trains in both directions over the bridge. Every year, more than 58 million rail passengers use the bridge.

Engineering plans to replace the Portal Bridge with a north bridge and a south bridge were completed in 2013 and funded by NJ TRANSIT, Amtrak, and the Federal Railroad Administration. The two new fixed-span bridges are to be built 53 feet above mean high water – more than double the height of the current bridge, allowing for higher speeds and an increase in train capacity.

Early construction contracts of about \$20 million have been awarded to proceed with the Portal North Bridge, including construction of a finger pier, installation of new fiber optic cable poles, realignment of a transmission pole, construction of a steel bridge structure over the Jersey City Municipal Utility Authority water main, and construction of a retaining wall. Early construction work funding has been provided by NJ TRANSIT and the U.S. Department of Transportation and local share funding for the balance of the Portal Bridge construction is in place through NJ TRANSIT and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. The total project cost is estimated at \$1.5 billion. Construction of the Portal South Bridge will come at a later date.

Last month, Governor Christie, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, and New Jersey and New York Congressional leaders met with President Donald Trump to discuss the nearly \$30 billion Gateway project in an effort to secure half of the funding for the program. Gateway development also includes new tracks under the Hudson River as well as repairs to existing tracks damaged during Superstorm Sandy in 2012 through a cooperative effort involving the federal government, New Jersey, New York, the Port Authority and public/private partnerships.

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