



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

### NEWS RELEASE

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### Gov. Whitman Asks FHWA To Suspend I-287 HOV Lanes

Gov. Christie Whitman today formally requested that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) permit New Jersey to suspend the operation of the high occupancy vehicles (HOV) lanes along I-287 in Somerset and Morris counties while that road is undergoing construction.

"My action today is based upon public sentiment that the construction of the HOV lanes on I-287 is creating undue congestion on what already is a heavily traveled highway corridor," Whitman said. "This is the right thing to do for commuters."

Whitman said the suspension is only temporary until construction of the entire 20-mile system along I-287 is completed in December.

"I believe very strongly in the use of HOV lanes and the clean air benefits they provide in the short run, however, the benefits of operating these lanes to reduce construction-related congestion for a limited time are greater," the Governor said.

New Jersey is requesting FHWA approval to ensure it does not risk losing nearly \$200 million in federal funds that have been spent to construct the I-287 HOV lanes.

"My request today is a good-faith effort to obtain relief for commuters who are wasting too many hours stalled in traffic jams. When construction is complete, and we return to HOV use on Route 287, New Jersey will be in the forefront of the nation for having HOV lanes on our major highways," Whitman added.

