

June 6, 2023

Senator Christopher J. Connors  
620 W. Lacey Road  
Forked River, NJ 08731

RE: 2023 Season Route 72 Bridge Project Lane Closures

Dear Senator Connors,

In April of 2022, representatives from all of the municipalities on Long Beach Island met with New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) representatives in response to their plan to limit access to Long Beach Island during the 2022 summer season to one lane of traffic. With support from the representatives of the 9<sup>th</sup> Legislative District, the NJDOT had agreed to move the schedule to the Fall of 2022. For the second consecutive summer season, our offices have been advised that the NJDOT is planning additional lane closures for the 2023 summer season. Besides the blatant disregard for public input and perspectives, several concerns surround this plan and the project.

- The project was initially proposed as an off-season project which would not impact safety and tourism. Daytime restrictions are unacceptable. Bridge closures and delays are unsuitable as they pose life safety concerns.
- Emergency management situations would be compromised as all hospitals are off the island, and nighttime emergencies are common. Volunteers from the mainland play a crucial role in such cases. Emergency services cannot be interrupted by the increased number of people in the summer season.
- Summertime storms bring heavy, flooding rains. It is imperative that traffic flow during these periods.
- Wintertime closures presented over two-hour wait times to access Long Beach Island. The population is at least ten times greater during the summer, as reflected by water consumption data.
- Most tenants utilize the evening to go to the mainland for supplies and groceries.
- Local businesses have ten to twelve weeks to succeed. They have suffered under pandemic restrictions, and the summer of 2023 is their opportunity to have an unrestricted season.
- Businesses and localities are experiencing workforce shortages. Limiting access will discourage any potential employees from commuting to Long Beach Island.

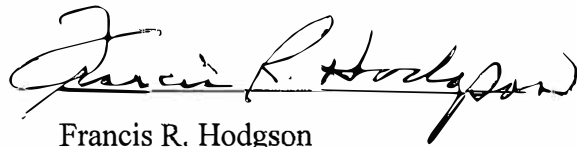
- The existing workforce coming to and from Long Beach Island, primarily middle and lower-class, will experience lateness issues, further affecting operations and the income for these individuals.
- Long Beach Island is known for being a spot for nightlife with restaurants, bars, amusements, shopping, and sweet shops. Closures will deter visitors from utilizing local businesses.
- Suppliers and distributors will have interrupted access affecting product availability.
- Most taxpayers are second homeowners with limited time to use their properties. Inaccessibility to their homes would result in property value drops and insufficient tax revenue for maintaining infrastructure.

Given the impact that lane closures will have in the summer season, all of the surrounding towns feel the effects of the project. The municipalities of Long Beach Island are requesting that the portions of the project that include lane closures be delayed until the fall. We are also asking for a point of contact that has the authority to shut the project down, communicate the project details, and respond to our inquiries within a reasonable amount of time. We appreciate your assistance and support in resolving this issue and await your response.

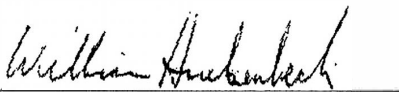
Yours truly,




Nancy Taggert Davis  
Mayor of the Borough of Beach Haven




Francis R. Hodgson  
Mayor of the Borough of Surf City



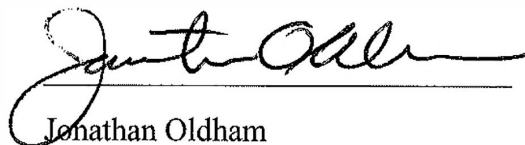
William Huelsenbeck  
Mayor of the Borough of Ship Bottom



Kirk O. Larson  
Mayor of the Borough of Barnegat Light



Joseph H. Mancini  
Mayor of Long Beach Township



Jonathan Oldham  
Mayor of the Borough of Harvey Cedars