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# *Public Hearing*

before

ASSEMBLY LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT LEGISLATIVE PANEL  
AND  
ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

*“Issues surrounding the Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System,  
between Trenton and Camden”*

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**LOCATION:** Keegan Center  
Burlington, New Jersey

**DATE:** September 24, 2002  
10:00 a.m.

**MEMBERS OF PANEL AND COMMITTEE PRESENT:**

Assemblyman Joseph V. Doria Jr., Chairman, Assembly Light Rail Transit Legislative Panel  
Assemblyman John S. Wisniewski, Chairman, Assembly Transportation Committee  
Assemblyman Jack Connors, Chair  
Assemblyman Paul A. Sarlo  
Assemblywoman Rose Marie Heck  
Assemblyman John E. Rooney  
Assemblyman John J. Burzichelli  
Assemblyman Gordon M. Johnson  
Assemblywoman Linda Stender



**ALSO PRESENT:**

Rusty Lachenauer  
Jerry Traino

Nancy M. Lipper  
*Office of Legislative Services*  
*Panel Aides*

John Fuller

*Assembly Majority*  
*Committee Aide*

*Assembly Republican*  
*Committee Aide*

***Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by***  
**The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,  
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey**

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**ASSEMBLYMAN JACK CONNERS (Chairman):** Good morning, everyone. I'm Assemblyman Jack Connors, and I'm going to be chairing this joint session of the New Jersey General Assembly Panel regarding the South Jersey Light Rail Line. Number one, I apologize for the late start. Some of our members have come a great distance. And, as Assemblyman Doria said, they were just putting up the orange cones on the Turnpike as he approached them.

I do have some opening comments that I would like to make first. First of all, I'd like to welcome everyone to the historic Burlington City in the Keegan Center. If Mayor Costello, I think he's -- is he in the audience here somewhere? (no response) I am very grateful to Mayor Costello and, of course, the Common Council of Burlington City for allowing us to have this hearing today. So, Mayor, please convey that to your Council members. Thank you very much.

I'd also like to thank Assembly Speaker, Albio Sires, for authorizing this unique joint committee session to take place today. Finally, I'd like to thank my distinguished colleagues, former Speaker and currently Chairman of the Light Rail Panel, Assemblyman Joe Doria, to my right; and, of course, Assemblyman John Wisniewski, who Chairs the Assembly Transportation Committee in the Assembly, for allowing me to preside over this joint hearing. So thank you, gentlemen.

It remains to be seen whether this will be a one-time exercise or the beginning of a protracted examination of the South Jersey Light Rail project. But whatever we eventually decide to do with respect to more hearings, it's obvious that New Jersey is going to learn some bitter lessons as we dig into the

details of this project, as the new system comes on-line next year. Before I go over some of the issues, I feel obligated to point out that everyone who is sitting here today would like to see this project become a success. None of the lawmakers here harbors a bias against mass transit. Indeed, nobody wants to see a mass transit investment of this scale turn into an abject failure.

We all want to see more mass transit projects come to fruition, especially here in South Jersey, but the odds for success were never particularly rosy for this project. Projected ridership figures were low. The rail route itself did not correspond in any way with anticipated regional population growth trends in South Jersey, and public support for the project was tepid at best.

Regrettably, this light rail was looked upon as an economic development opportunity instead of an actual transportation mechanism. The cost for this endeavor will be enormous, over \$640 million. And if you add on the interest on the debt, it will be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1 billion. This burden will be thrust squarely on the backs of New Jersey taxpayers, because it's likely to take years, perhaps decades, before this rail line will generate enough fare revenue to appreciably offset its daily operating costs.

This is the root cause for why we're here today. The way I see it, we have four objectives to meet while conducting this inquiry. First, we need to ensure accountability for the taxpayers who are footing the bill for this project. Second, we need to take an honest look at why prior administrations gave authorizations for such a questionable undertaking. And third, we need to ensure the integrity of the approval process for mass transit projects, so limited funding does not get wasted. And fourth, we need to make sure that the long-term transportation mission of our State's mass transit agency -- and

that's New Jersey Transit -- is not undermined or diminished by projects such as this.

When I wrote to Chairmen Wisniewski and Doria seeking an legislative investigation into this project, what I envisioned was a frank and thorough fact-finding effort. There are, after all, serious concerns about this project that go beyond the issue of financing. Because the line will operate on existing freight/railroad tracks, its hours of operation will be extremely limited. The diesel-powered light rail cars also pose numerous safety issues, because they pass through established neighborhoods, including right here in Burlington City. They'll be no less than 55 grade crossings, 20 stops, and 23 rail bridges.

There are environmental issues. Several wetlands will need to be traversed. And finally, delays have occurred in the construction time table. One aspect of this project that I would like us to steer clear of, however, is the lawsuit that the project contractor, Southern New Jersey Rail Group, has filed, seeking \$140 million in alleged cost over-runs. That lawsuit, ladies and gentlemen, is for a court of law to decide, not this legislative body.

Before we begin questioning, I'd like to ask my two Co-Committee Chairmen if they'd like to make additional remarks.

Chairman Wisniewski.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Thank you, Chairman Conners.

First, I want to commend you for your determination on this issue. This is something that, for your entire tenure in the General Assembly, you've had an interest in. And when the majority took over in January, you had come

to me and, I know, to Assemblyman Doria about holding these hearings. This is fruition of those efforts on your part. I want to make it clear at the outset that, as Chairman of the Transportation Committee, I am a strong supporter of mass transit. I believe that over the past decade our State has not invested enough in mass transportation, and the result that we see is gridlock and congestion throughout our state. That being said, we need to understand this project so that, as our state moves forward in the coming years, we can wisely and accurately spend our transportation dollars.

We need to understand, for instance, why this project has no Federal component, no Federal money whatsoever. The reason that's important is that, when we do a project without Federal aid, that means more tax dollars in New Jersey have to be dedicated to one project. We all know that we, just simply, don't have an unlimited pool of funds, so we need to make sure we spend them wisely. We need to make sure we get the type of assistance we can from the Federal government. That's an important question in my mind.

We also need to make sure, on a going-forward basis, that rail projects and mass transit projects serve riders that can help reduce the congestion that everyone in this state is so frustrated about. There's no doubt that, in many instances, you could build a transportation project and riders will come -- if you take any of the train lines that were built in this state, at the turn of the century and before, and ridership and towns and communities grew up around it.

But, again, when we're talking about scarce state dollars, we don't have the luxury of building something today that, perhaps, will work well far

down into the future. We need to make sure that we first concentrate on getting those existing populations, who need the mass transit service most, off the road and onto mass transit.

I look forward to hearing testimony today that will address these questions. I look forward to hearing testimony from local officials about the impact of this project on the area. At the end of the day, this is a project that is virtually almost complete, and it will be up to this administration to make sure it runs well. But we need to make sure that, when we go in the future and we have additional projects, we do them right, we do them wisely, we do them financially soundly. And I hope that today's hearing will provide the basis for us doing that.

So, thank you, Chairman Conners, and thank you to the members of the Committee who are here today.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Assemblyman Joe Doria, Chairman of the Light Rail Panel.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Thank you, Chairman Jack Conners and Chairman John Wisniewski.

It's a pleasure to be here today. I want to begin by thanking Chairman Conners for asking us to come here to have the discussion and review of the South Jersey Light Rail project.

I also want to recognize a former colleague of mine in the General Assembly, who has been mayor of this great town for many, many years, and that's Herman Costello. When I first came to the Legislature, Herman was in the Legislature with me, and he sat right near by. I had an opportunity to get to know him well and to learn from him. He has maintained his involvement



and commitment to the City of Burlington for many, many long years. So I want to thank him for hosting this Committee meeting here today.

I think what we're here today to do is to talk about the role that mass transit has in the future of the State of New Jersey and to look at this project and to learn from this project. There was a lot of controversy when this project was first proposed. There were a number of other alternate routes that were proposed. And under the leadership of then-Chairperson Rose Heck, we held a number of hearings here in South Jersey, when former Senator Bill Haines was still alive. He was very interested and very supportive of the concept of a light rail line in South Jersey.

I think that what we need to do today is to look at this project and determine whether or not this type of project is where we should be going. And let me just say, I think the light rail is the wave of the future. I think that we need to continue mass transit. We need to move away from the internal combustion engine and move toward means of transportation that pollute the environment less, that are more cost effective and efficient, and allow large numbers of people to move in a manner that is positive to the environment and to the economic well-being and development of an area.

I think one of the issues that occurs is whether or not a light rail line should be built because it meets the needs of people who have to move and who have to travel to work, or it should be built for economic development. Obviously, we hope economic development is an outgrowth of the actual construction of mass transit or light rail. But whether it should be the primary purpose, is, I think, where the conflict comes in. There will be those who would argue that it should be, and others who would argue that, rather, the

purpose should be to move people -- those people who are going to work, or going to entertainment, or to shop -- in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

I think that we are here, today, to look at how this project developed. We understand that this project will be built, that it will serve the people of South Jersey from Camden to Trenton, and that, in the end, it will, hopefully, grow and prosper and provide the type of service that we all believe that it should. However, I do think, by looking at this project, we need to see how we came to the conclusion that this is the way to go: What was done to analyze and to develop the concept of this specific project, and what we can learn from this in the future development of other mass transit systems, especially light rail systems.

Let me say that I strongly believe that the concept of light rail is a viable concept, one which we need to continue to take advantage of wherever possible, if it's economically viable. Let me also say that the concept of a design, build, operate, and maintain system, which is something that this Light Rail Panel, working with the Commissioner and the Governor at that time and the Legislature on a bipartisan basis, was able to implement, to my mind, is the best system, because it guarantees that the project moves along quickly, and it also guarantees that the project, when it is built, will be operated in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Because the company that builds it will have to operate it, and if they don't do a good job, obviously, it's going to cost them in the operational process.

We have to look at the issue of subsidies, and that's obviously part of this problem and part of where we have to, obviously, try to determine whether it's cost effective. I do believe mass transit is the way we should move.

I do believe that we need to take advantage of every mass transit opportunity. I think that one of the unique problems of this line, and we knew it from the beginning, was the fact that it's running on a freight line and that it cannot operate at a maximum number of hours. The Hudson-Bergen Light Rail operates for 20 hours. This will operate less than 20 hours. That is a concern, because people who go to an event may not be able to come home on the same mass transit line, because the mass transit line will close at 10:00 p.m. in the evening. So if you're going to an event that's, let's say, at the Tweeter Center in Camden, from Trenton, and the event ends at 11:00, you will not be able to take the light rail back to Trenton, because it will not be operating, because the freight line will be operating.

I think there's a lot of issues here. I agree with Chairman Conners that this is not about the lawsuit and the controversy going on at the present time, over overruns and costs. That should not be addressed today. Rather, what should be addressed is how this line will serve the people of South Jersey, how can we make it more efficient, what can we learn from how this line was planned and actually then built, as it is being presently built, and what we can do to guarantee that it will be successful in the future.

So I want to thank you, Chairman, for allowing the Light Rail Panel to join with you today and to say that this is a unique situation. We very rarely, in my memory -- have never -- had a joint hearing of the Light Rail Panel and the Transportation Committee in the past, and I think that this is a step in a positive direction.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you, Chairman Doria.

I would like to introduce the other Assembly members that are here. On my left, we have Assemblyman Paul Sarlo, Assemblywoman Linda Stender, Assemblyman Gordon Johnson, and Assemblyman John Burzichelli. To my right, we have Assemblywoman Rose Marie Heck and Assemblyman John Rooney.

What I'd like to do now is allow those members to have something to say-- I would ask -- I have a lot of people that want to testify today, so I would ask if you have remarks that you keep them as brief as you can.

Would any of the members like to speak?

Assemblywoman Heck, please.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: As I had said to you earlier, Mr. Chairman, I thought it would be advisable to speak historically on this particular subject. But I do want to preface that with a statement that, after I heard Marty Robins on 101.5 this morning, I was shocked and thought to myself, is this a search and destroy mission? I hope not. I have heard that this -- from you that you're just looking into certain matters. I hope this is done fairly. Personally, I have my doubts because of the lawsuit. We cannot look at this fully, because we will be restricted from hearing the contractor and hearing certain things about the line and all of the rest of it.

As far as the looking into and investigating certain projects, I have no problem with that, because many contractors gold plate their work. I look at another huge project, such as Secaucus Transfer. I think that needs some investigation and looking into. I don't think we should focus only on the South Jersey line. I, again, look at the success of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail and look to the contractor who has done an outstanding job and, perhaps, we

should have more oversight from New Jersey Transit on these projects, as they move along, to benefit all of us in the State of New Jersey.

I know that safety issues are being addressed. And again, I'm quite concerned about the statement made by Mr. Robins, and I'll address that again later. Mr. Robins was a doomsday person from day one about light rail. Didn't like it, didn't want it, wanted us to have buses. He came to testify at one of the hearings in Jersey City and told us the Hudson-Bergen Line would be a disaster, that there was no ridership, etc. You can see the benefits of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail, which is now moving into Hoboken, and we'll have that opening on Sunday. That's part and parcel.

But I think we have to look at this, and I picked out one of the things I put together when we had that opening ceremony in Camden outside the aquarium. And I'm going to read this, because I think it's beneficial to all of us.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: It says, "Today, May 8, 2000, the Assembly Light Rail Panel remembers Senator Bill Haines and dedicates this day in his memory, as the beginning of a New Renaissance for South Jersey. Bill, you wanted the best for the people of South Jersey. You looked to the future and could see the building of a new economy and an improvement in the quality of life for the older generation, the younger generation, and the generations to come.

We have not forgotten your dedication, your courage, and stamina as we held that historic Panel Meeting in Mount Holly. Five plus hours of testimony. You stayed there with me for the entire meeting. You were

eloquent as you presented the history of rail, with its roots in South Jersey and in your family history. We agreed afterwards that we would promote only that portion of the route acceptable to the majority of the people. That piece will extend 34 miles along the Delaware River between Trenton and Camden. And we knew that afterwards, when all could see your vision for South Jersey, and all could view the success of the HBLRT in the Northeast, others would join our quest. I know you're with us today, as you were yesterday, in full support of the people who will benefit from this new light rail system.

On behalf of the Assembly Light Rail Panel and the late Senator Bill Haines, I thank all of you -- Governor Whitman; Commissioner Jim Weinstein; former Commissioner, Frank Wilson; New Rail Construction Director, Dan Censullo; former New Rail Director, Frank Russo; Phyllis Elston of the New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers, formerly of New Rail Construction; Project Director, Kent Riffo; DMJM Engineer, John Von Briesen; Boswell Engineering, Steve Boswell and Peter TenKate; Community Participation Specialist, Gerry Savidge; Burlington County expert, Carol Ann Thomas; Pam Reid, President of South Jersey Union Workers; Frank D'Antonio; and everyone who has worked so hard to bring us this magnificent day which begins a new era of prosperity and opportunity. The South Jersey Line gives transportation access to the citizens of the area, facilitating the mobility of the people in Mercer, Burlington, and Camden Counties. This is the beginning of an environmentally sound and people-friendly means of transportation. It is barrier free and can be accessed by people in wheelchairs, by moms and dads with children in baby carriages, and by seniors with shopping carts. The line will include 20 station stops with park-and-ride

facilities at some of the stops. The South Jersey Line will provide direct connections to services offered by New Jersey Transit, PATCO, SEPTA, and Amtrak. It gives local residents an easy ride to places such as Philadelphia, New York City, Trenton, and Atlantic City. Today is the beginning of a new era of prosperity for South Jersey.”

It was signed by Assembly Speaker Jack Collins. It was presented by myself, as the Chair of the Light Rail Legislative Panel, and the members, Alex DeCroce and Joe Doria. I’ll have more to say as we progress, but thank you very much for the opportunity.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: You’re welcome, Assemblywoman.  
Assemblyman Rooney.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to come today. I think I’m the furthest legislator away. My home is about three miles from the Hudson River and four blocks from the New York state line.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: It’s far.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: It took me quite a while to get here, but I was very happy to do it. One of the things, I’m a new member of the Light Rail Panel only this past year. I want to thank and recognize the two Chairmen of the previous Light Rail Panel for their work in bringing light rail to the State of New Jersey. Assemblywoman Rose Heck and, also, Assemblyman Joe Doria have worked very hard. Joe sponsored a tour of the Bergen-Hudson Light Rail, and it’s amazing. What was really amazing about it was to go through a part of the city and see the old and the new. There was a lot of old buildings that were falling down, decrepit -- environmentally

challenged, to use a very light expression -- and then to go into the area that had been redeveloped. And that's what really caught my eye and caught my mind in saying, hey, this has done something to rejuvenate our cities. It has improved the environmental climate down there and also the economic climate in those cities. It was well-needed. The transportation was a side effect, and it was a side benefit. We have the transportation now linking the cities, and it was amazing what happened.

I wanted to get on this Panel for the simple reason I want light rail in my area. They discontinued rail service in my area in 1957, and this was the old thing with General Motors pushing buses and having buses come in belching smoke. We cannot commute. Most of my people in my town -- I happen to be the mayor of Northvale also -- are basically bedroom commuters. They commute into New York City. We're approximately, I believe, 14, 15 miles from the George Washington Bridge, but we'd have to drive or we have to take buses, and the commute is long. We can cut our commute in half if we have light rail.

So I'm very proud to say I'm representing my district. I'm there to lobby for light rail. The light rail down here, I believe, is going to bring economic revitalization here, and it's going to be environmentally safe. I think it's a great idea. I've seen what they've done. I was one of those non-believers.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I remember.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: You remember. And Rose and I have talked. I said, "You'll never get this off the ground," and surprisingly enough she did. I, kind of, want to make a couple of quotes, and I remember things like, in the *Field of Dreams*, they said, "Build it and they will come."



Believe me, you build the light rail and you're going to get the ridership that will use it. There's another thing that I remember out of facts, and I'm so close to the George Washington Bridge. The architect for the George Washington Bridge designed in the two levels. They built only the one level. But he was told, "We're not going to build that bridge because you've got that other-- Take it out. We want to save money." He said, "No. We're not going to build it without the provision for the second level." And guess what? He was absolutely right. If I'm not mistaken, that architect was Frank Lloyd Wright, and he was the one who designed the bridge, refused to take out that second level as a cost saving. Thank God today that he did, otherwise we'd have some real problems crossing the Hudson.

So, I'm just saying, right now we're in the forefront of the future. This is the future. The transportation needs that we have -- South Jersey, North Jersey, pretty much the same. We've got to bring it in, but it also has those side benefits. I'm very proud to be on this Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to speak.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you, Assemblyman Rooney.

Any other members?

Please.

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: Just real brief. I'm Assemblyman Sarlo from up in the 36th Legislative District, not far from where John and Rose live. As a member of the Light Rail Panel, I've had the opportunity to learn the successes of our Hudson-Bergen Light Rail. Today, I look forward to this fact-finding mission of how we got where we are today on this South Jersey Light Rail. When I'm not doing my Assembly business -- there's not many

hours left in the day -- I spend the rest of my time designing and building infrastructure projects. As an engineer, I am a firm believer in mass transit, as many of the members of the Panel are, here today. But, I believe, when we design and build these mass transit projects, we should be designing and building to take care of moving people today. They should be designed in a manner that has enough capacity to move people in the future, but we should be designing and building that we're moving people today. I'm looking forward to learning a little bit more about how we got where we are today.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Anyone else? (no response)

Thank you.

The first person I'd like to have come testify is the Commissioner of Transportation, Jamie Fox. Commissioner, thank you for being here today and please have a seat.

**COMMISSIONER JAMES P. FOX:** Thank you very much, Chairman, Chairman, Chairman, and other members of the Assembly Committee. (laughter) It's correct. Thank you for having me, and I welcome the opportunity to be here today. I know you're going to be hearing, after me, from George Warrington, the head of New Jersey Transit.

If all goes well, the South Jersey Light Rail System will open next year. The Department of Transportation and New Jersey Transit will do everything we can to ensure a timely and successful start-up. We're developing a major marketing campaign to attract riders, and we're working with municipalities to add parking and increase access to the line. We're determined to make South Jersey Light Rail work.

Governor McGreevey and I believe the best way to ease congestion, clean our air, and improve the quality of life for all New Jerseyans is through mass transit. During this administration's short tenure, we've made significant strides. Governor McGreevey hired George Warrington, one of the nation's leading mass transportation managers, who has launched customer service and capacity improvements. The Governor has secured \$250 million toward the purchase of bilevel cars that will increase capacity. We've already cut the number of standees on New Jersey Transit trains from more than 4000 to nearly zero. We've come a long way, but much work needs to be done.

New Jersey's transportation needs exceed our means. Over the next five years, bridge repairs and improvements alone will demand \$2.5 billion more than we have. Years of deferred maintenance have left New Jersey with a huge backlog of rail and highway repairs. Meanwhile, the State Transportation Trust Fund is nearly depleted, and next year we'll have to fight hard and smart in Washington for our fair share of Federal funds. We have many needs and not enough money.

Wherever I go, whether it's Monmouth, Morris, Gloucester, Bergen, Atlantic, everyone has a mass transit project that deserves consideration. I'd like to say yes to all of them. No one appreciates mass transit more than I do, but we must prioritize our needs and use the money we have efficiently. In truth, this project would not have passed the administration's test for moving people now, not 10 years from now. From the outset, this alignment from Camden to Trenton was ill-advised and poorly planned -- a billion dollars spent solely in the hopes of promoting economic development. One has to wonder how and why the decision was made. I

believe that every rail line attracts economic development. However, we do not have the luxury of funding a project simply to attract businesses, not while people are waiting years to get a parking space near a train station, not while our buses are falling down, not while Route 1 is gridlocked, or while the Parkway still has traffic lights instead of exits.

Let me be clear. I'm a strong supporter of investing in South Jersey. Much of the state's population growth is happening here, and we must plan accordingly. A billion dollars could have been used much more effectively to combat congestion on Routes 295 and 42. We could have built a light rail system to Glassboro or Mt. Holly, where 16,000 people would be lining up for rides every day. But instead, the Whitman administration halted its own major investment study -- a study that would have led us to build the more practical and efficient South Jersey Light Rail System. Short-circuiting the process precluded any Federal funding for this project and placed the burden completely on the shoulders of New Jersey taxpayers and commuters.

Unbelievably, this \$1 billion light rail system is the only one in the entire nation built exclusively with State money and without any Federal oversight or funding. By comparison, 90 percent of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail System will be Federally funded. What we're left with is a system that's expected to draw 9300 trips a day, if we're lucky. To add insult to injury, every taxpayer in New Jersey will be paying for South Jersey Light Rail for decades. Because the State did not have the funds and the Federal government would not provide any, bonds were floated. Now those bonds are costing New Jersey \$48 million each year for the next 17 years. Operating losses on South Jersey Light Rail will cost New Jersey another 25 million annually. Each year

we'll have to pay \$75 million before we can buy a single new rail car, or a bus, or repair a bridge, or relieve congestion on 42, 55, 70, and 295. Whether it's E-ZPass, DMV, or South Jersey Light Rail, it is this administration's responsibility to fix them.

To quote a recent editorial in a local paper, "Harping is not an option." As I said at the outset, we intend to make the most of the Southern New Jersey Light Rail System. But we will take these expensive and hard-earned lessons to heart. We will not repeat the mistakes of the past. Instead, we will continue to plan and invest in the future of South Jersey and of all New Jersey. At the end of the day, we all want to say we met our obligation to the next generation. Our parents built the Garden State Parkway -- at least some of them -- and the New Jersey Turnpike. Our grandparents built the George Washington Bridge, the Ben Franklin bridges. We must ask ourselves whether our legacy will be as relevant. But only by honest discussion and realizing that we have limited resources, and building where people will line up for trains tomorrow morning, will we have left that legacy that we were all either elected or appointed to do. By putting our head in the sand and saying that we can just build without the money and hope they will come, is not an option that we have.

Thank you very much for having me.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Commissioner, if you could remain there, what I'd like to do is -- if I could have the head of New Jersey Transit, George Warrington, join you.

COMMISSIONER FOX: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: I assume he has a statement to make.

**GEORGE WARRINGTON:** Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Then, if the two of you would take questions together, I'd--

Mr. Warrington, again, thank you for being here today, joining us today.

MR. WARRINGTON: Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. As you know, my name is George Warrington. I assumed my responsibilities at New Jersey Transit as Executive Director last May. I want to thank you for providing me with this opportunity to testify on the Southern New Jersey Light Rail Project.

As I'm well aware, and we're all well aware, issues have been raised with respect to the cost of the project, as well as the decision-making process that led to the alignment and the overall benefit of this system for the taxpayers. While I cannot speak to the issues relating to the construction contract, because of the pending litigation, I can address some of the concerns raised with regard to the decision-making process and the associated analytics relating to the project.

First, I'd like to say, and I'd like to echo what Commissioner Fox said, New Jersey Transit -- I, personally, and New Jersey Transit are entirely committed to providing quality transit service across the State of New Jersey and in Southern New Jersey. In fact, today New Jersey Transit provides more than 25 million rides to Transit customers each year in South Jersey. As a matter of fact, the cities of Camden and Atlantic City are among the top 20

cities in the nation with the highest percentage of workers in those cities who use mass transit to get to work.

The question is not whether South Jersey deserves a major rail transit investment of the size and scope of South Jersey Light Rail. The question is whether the project is the right rail project for South Jersey and whether an appropriate process was in place to determine which alignment, not whether an alignment, but which appropriate alignment, would best serve the transportation mobility and genuine congestion relief needs of the region. And as a former resident of South Jersey and Camden County and Voorhees, one who dealt with Route 73 and Route 42 and Route 55 and Route 38 every day, I have a personal appreciation for the congestion problem in this region, Mr. Chairman.

Let me also say, up front, that New Jersey Transit is committed, as Commissioner Fox has said, to making this project a success. The system will open next year, and we are determined to do everything possible to attract ridership over both the short-haul, the mid-term, as well as the long-haul, which we have to be focused on. The best business decision we can make, at this point, is to do everything we can to make the service work for both the corridor, as well as for the region. We've placed an extra effort on this start-up, precisely because of the concerns raised with regard to viability of the service.

After reviewing the decision-making process, which determined the current alignment, it appears that the planning process was short-circuited somewhat. The planning process is a very important part of the development of transit projects not only in New Jersey, but across the nation. The up-front

work to understand and project ridership, demographic changes, and future land-use patterns are as critical to the successful development of transit projects as are sound design and sound construction.

In the case of South Jersey Light Rail, a number of studies were initiated to evaluate alternative alignments for expanded rail service in South Jersey, some under a Federal process and others, later, using State funds. Each of these studies dealt with a different set of alignments, meaning the South Jersey Light Rail project advanced without the benefit of a comprehensive and more definitive look at all of the alternative alignments in the region.

A major investment study of potential South Jersey alignments began in 1994 under the Federally sanctioned New Starts process. The Federal process requires that a rigorous alternative analysis be undertaken for major transit investments, in order to qualify for Federal support and participation. Alignments must be evaluated for ridership potential, as well as environmental and community impacts. The Federal process also requires that hearings be held and that the project be reviewed and rated by the Federal Transit Administration within the United States Department of Transportation.

However, the major investment study did not include analysis of the alignment that is currently under construction. The planning work for the current South Jersey alignment was a product of a special study commissioned by New Jersey Transit and an environmental impact statement submitted to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Those documents addressed the ridership, the land use, and environmental impacts along the Southern New Jersey Light Rail System route, without being compared,



directly, to other potential routes in the region, which were the subject of the earlier major investment study sanctioned under the Federal process.

In the relatively short period of time that I've been with New Jersey Transit, we've conducted a review of the alternative South Jersey Rail alignments. I will tell you, as of today, while the work is by no means conclusive -- and we have a lot more work to do there -- it does suggest that the choice of the current initial light rail route probably would have been different had a more complete comparison of alternative alignments in the region been undertaken, including those alignments to Glassboro through Woodbury, as well as Mt. Holly.

The Southern New Jersey Light Rail System's route does not compare well to other light rail alignments in North Jersey, or several of the alternative alignments in South Jersey. For example, an apples-to-apples analysis indicates that the capital cost per rider for South Jersey Light Rail is approximately double the cost of Hudson-Bergen Light Rail -- that is, capital costs per rider -- and about 15 percent higher than the estimated cost for the alternative South Jersey alignments.

We estimate that Southern New Jersey Light Rail's operating subsidy per rider will be about four times the cost of Hudson-Bergen Light Rail and two to three times the cost of the alternative Southern New Jersey alignments. These estimated subsidy costs are based on updated ridership projections for the South Jersey project. The original supplemental study document estimated a daily ridership level of about 9300 riders in the first year of operation, and about 13,700 after five years. We have subsequently

revisited those assumptions, and we will continue to do that over the next two months or so.

We are reassessing these numbers to take into account changes that have occurred since the original study. For example, the original projections -- 9300 riders at opening -- assumed that a feeder bus system would be implemented and that the current Route 409 bus service between Camden and Trenton would be completely discontinued. The ridership forecasting also assumed a fare structure that did not account for the negative impact of transferring from a light rail system to the PATCO high-speed line in Camden, at the Walter Rand Transportation Center. In the modeling business around transit demand, it is commonplace and necessary to apply a penalty associated with the negative aspects associated with a required transfer.

The last assumption is of critical importance. The ability to predict ridership is highly dependent upon projections of residential and commercial development along the route. Whereas conventional estimates are based primarily on existing population characteristics, the analysis for the ridership projections of Southern New Jersey Light Rail predicted induced ridership based upon projected levels of development.

We now, as I said before, are in the process of re-evaluating the ridership projections for the entire line. We've also hired an independent consultant to work with New Jersey Transit to help us define, more precisely, what those appropriate estimates should be. That estimate will take into account the limited hours of service required to accommodate night-time freight operations and some of the other factors that I talked about earlier, including what's an appropriate penalty associated with a transfer to PATCO

at the Camden Transportation Center. I would add that, roughly, half of that projected demand assumes a Philadelphia destination with a transfer to the PATCO system at the Walter Rand Center, and that may or may not bear out in our reviewed analysis. I just don't know at this point in time.

The significance of the ridership forecast relates to the project's fare box return. Virtually every public transit service across this nation and across the world will never, ever turn a profit. It's the nature of the economics of the business, but fare box return can cover a significant portion of operating costs, thereby reducing the need for State appropriations to cover operating losses. On average, New Jersey Transit's fare box return across the entire system is about 65 percent -- bus, rail and light rail combined and averaged across the system. Although we have not completed our ridership estimates, as I said earlier, for the system in South Jersey, we believe that fares will cover 12 percent to 15 percent of South Jersey Light Rail's operating costs.

Total capital costs for the system approached \$1 billion -- 972 million to be exact. The figure includes the DBOM contract costs, engineering of project management, real estate costs, utility costs, and, as the Commissioner mentioned earlier, financing costs, which will total about \$268 million. The entire DBOM construction contract was financed using New Jersey EDA bonds. Unlike New Jersey Transit's Hudson-Bergen Light Rail DBOM contract, the financing was not granted, as the Commissioner has indicated, on a fixed-revenue stream of Federal New Starts funds, meaning that New Jersey Transit and the State of New Jersey will be repaying this loan until the year 2019. In fact, the first \$48 million a year that we receive from, for example, the New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund over the next 17 years will

be devoted to paying off those Economic Development Authority bonds, which is a fairly substantial obligation. When the capital costs for the project are added to the 10-year operating costs, the total cost of design, build, operate, and maintain for 10 years will be about \$1.1 billion.

In summary, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, South Jersey Light Rail will be a relatively expensive system to build and to operate. The State will be paying for it for some time to come, since no Federal funds were used. Had a more comprehensive evaluation of potential South Jersey alignments been undertaken, I believe that a better alignment probably would have emerged for the initial operating segment, one whose characteristics would have been more favorable in terms of ridership, cost recovery, fare box recovery, and congestion relief.

I understand that the Delaware River Port Authority is initiating a new study of potential transit improvements in South Jersey. We will participate in this effort, and I look forward to reviewing its conclusions. We'll be a very able partner in connection with that look forward. As a former Executive Director of the Delaware River Port Authority and President of the PATCO High Speed Line, I have considerable suggestions around what those opportunities might look like.

Although the South Jersey Light Rail Project may not be the best for South Jersey, we are where we are, and I believe we can make the project work or, at least, work better. We're in the process of revisiting all the assumptions relating to ridership, as I mentioned earlier -- assumptions about feeder bus service, induced ridership, and transit-related development. I hope to provide, in very short order, a plan for maximizing ridership on the system,

and some of the possibilities which we are looking at include: Adjustments to local bus routes so they complement, rather than compete for, light rail; an extensive marketing campaign, in particular tied to students at Rutgers-Camden; sale of joint discounted PATCO Light Rail tickets; implementation of a simplified fare system with free bus transfers, perhaps in Trenton; discounted or free parking and downtown fares in Trenton, Camden to encourage circulator-type service; and implementation of short-term service at the tail end of the system in Trenton and Camden.

In the long term, however, our best means of increasing ridership on the system is to encourage the right kind of development near the stations along the line. Public transportation, as the Commissioner has said earlier, can be an effective public policy tool in the State's arsenal. It has the power to effect positive change in neighborhoods and towns throughout the state. New Jersey is a leader, nationally, in transit-related development, probably second only to Toronto, Canada.

In Jersey City, for example, some 15-million-square feet of office space has emerged along the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail alignment. Around train stations in New Jersey, developers are eyeing property -- for the first time in, probably, 10 years -- eyeing property for retail, residential, and mixed-use development. The prospects for this kind of development along the route of South Jersey Light Rail can be very real, if they are cultivated properly.

As a matter of fact, just last week I had a conversation with Hank Dittmar, who runs the Great American Station Foundation in Washington, an organization devoted to bringing critical mass around train stations across the country. In fact, I invited Hank to join us here in New Jersey in early October

to talk about how we might be able to provide assistance and support to municipalities and to New Jersey Transit around facilitating, bringing the right means to facilitate, development in and around, adjacent to, not only at South Jersey Light Rail service, but other train stations across the system.

History tells us that constructing transit systems in non-developed territory can, in fact, be fruitful more than folly. I understand the long-term benefits associated with these kinds of investments. In fact, when August Belmont decided to extend the Interborough Rapid Transit, the IRT as we know it today, to Queens in the early 1900s, he was ridiculed. As we all know, small fortunes were made in the real estate market along the IRT, which today is the most densely populated urbanized area in the country.

While New Jersey Transit's primary mission relates to congestion relief, rather than economic development, it's clear that improving the economics of South Jersey Light Rail will require substantial economic growth in the corridor and in the region. We at New Jersey Transit are prepared, as I said earlier, to facilitate those development partnerships wherever and whenever possible. We'll work hard to ensure the highest level of success for the project. At the same time, we are committed to ensuring that our planning and our capital development processes yield better-performing investment choices, going forward. We don't need to endlessly study projects. I have a full appreciation for frustration that arises from years and years and years of studying projects.

But at the same time, what we need to do is have a process that evaluates and prioritizes all proposed new initiatives through an objective set of criteria or prism. Perhaps, more importantly, we need a capital planning

and programing process that also balances basic infrastructure needs of today's existing system, which is carrying about 800,000 people a day across this state, with demands for new starts and new services.

Since becoming Executive Director of Transit, I've taken a back-to-basics approach. That thinking values the core infrastructure needs of the existing rail, bus, and light rail system that provides those 800,000 trips a day. We have to address capacity. We have to address reliability and the state of good repair of our existing system. Looking forward, we're currently developing the basic, annual minimum capital needs of New Jersey's transit network and putting a capital evaluation process in place that evaluates new projects, relative to core needs, and rates them, not only based on their cost and their benefit, but also on their impacts on the operating budget and on requirements for State operating assistance, which are often, in these processes, a secondary consideration. Because, in the end, we have to figure out ways to pay the bill. It is becoming increasingly, increasingly difficult at New Jersey Transit to do it without a substantial increase in State operating support.

South Jersey is a very important region for New Jersey Transit. As I said earlier, we are committed to delivering this project. I look forward to returning to the Committee late winter, early spring, with a much better sense of the ridership and demand forecasts of this line and the steps that we're going to take to make sure we're achieving the maximum potential here. Let me assure you that we will do everything we can to improve the economics. We have much work to do to ensure that South Jersey realizes the benefits. I have every expectation that we will deliver.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you, Director Warrington. As Assemblywoman Heck said, "That may be a sign of things to come."

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: It's a sign of things to come. I did want to make some comments, if you don't mind.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: And I think we had some piano music back there earlier, too. I just, if I may, I just--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: When you're finished, Mr. Chairman, I have questions and comments.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: When I'm finished. Fine.

I just had a question. I guess you had indicated, earlier -- you talked about the comparison of alignments -- and hindsight, I guess, is 20-20 -- and would we have done it along the river, as we did, or would we do it somewhere else. I know that you're new, but how in your mind or as you see it, how did New Jersey Transit come to the conclusion that this should be given priority, and this is what we should do, and we should do it without any Federal money, and we should do it with our own money? Can you speak to that.

MR. WARRINGTON: I don't have any history with the decision-making process. My sense is that there was a lot of frustration with the endless studies that have been going on for a long, long time, number one. Number two, I think that there were considerable political difficulties associated with putting the system along an alignment that, probably, would have made much better economic sense. And in the end, the path of least resistance to secure a light rail service was Camden to Trenton, probably



because of the lack of density, because you did not have established densities in those communities.

From a pure transportation, transit planning, and economic point of view, those other alignments clearly would have made more sense. But when you have to move to a path of least resistance, number one, and number two, deliver a project, period, that alignment appeared to be the most practical and deliverable in a relatively short period of time, without having to deal with a whole host of community objections along the other alignments, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

Assemblywoman Heck.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Just as a point of information, and I would have liked to have spoken to you privately about these things, there are a lot of people who worked on this project. Senator Haines was an expert in transportation. I think that everyone would agree to that fact. This was the line that he chose. Certainly, we wanted to go from Gloucester to bring more ridership, and we were in an economic upturn at that time. Looking at the moneys coming from the Federal government, we on the Light Rail Panel worked with the contractors to obtain the money from the Feds. We were able to obtain, for that particular year, 80 percent of the entire nation's funding, because we caught everybody else asleep at the switch. Our project, DBOM light rail, was the first of its kind in the nation. It has moved along quite well. I attribute that to the contractor. Maybe, and probably, we should have looked at the contractors a little bit more, the philosophy of the contractors.

As I mentioned before, I'm not sure you were in the room, some of our contractors gold plated things, and we should watch that. Then there are a myriad of consultants that we pull into place, not the least of whom is a Marty Robins, who goes from pillar to post collecting those fees from all of us, including us here in New Jersey.

I think it's important to note that Assemblyman Bodine has proposed legislation, A-1935, which the Transportation Committee approved and Transit supported. That will be feasibility of creating rapid transit systems that will, when implemented, shuttle residents, in some fashion, along Routes 73 and 130 and from outlying park-and-rides to the light rail. This should help.

You spoke about stations. Let's look at the first station that I've heard of. I haven't seen it yet, but Camden is supposed to be magnificent. Is it? Have you visited it?

COMMISSIONER FOX: Yes, if I could, Assemblywoman. There is not an argument-- We believe in rail and light rail. This probably would have been a great project to build. What we're saying is that we need to prioritize. Whether we were in a booming economy at the time, decisions were made, you still have -- where we have a crisis. We have two years for people to get a parking spot to get on a train. We have roads that are jammed. We have, quite frankly -- I believe that we should not be building rail lines for economic development purposes, hoping that in 15 years they'll be people and ridership. I think if we look around this state, we know that we have needs now. If we're going to get people off of roads, we need to build rail lines where

people are now, so we can put them on trains now, and get them off the road now.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I believe that too. But let's face it, transportation dollars do not decrease or minimize over the years. They increase. Some of the projects will become unattainable. You wouldn't even be able to build them in 10 years. But I will say this. I think the connections are important. I believe that the Chairman of New Jersey Transit will work towards that goal of increasing numbers, and I want to advise you of my past information on New Jersey Transit. Be wary of some of the people working in Transit. Their information is very questionable. They gave us figures for HBLRT that were horrific and that nothing would occur on the Hudson-Bergen Line, particularly in Bayonne. Joe can address that. They tried to kill that one. That's the best part of it. My feeling is that we have to have an open mind and believe in a project and make it work. I understand that you're already working on a Route 42 and 295 connection. We're spending money on that project, I believe.

COMMISSIONER FOX: In Trenton, we are starting it, yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes, we are. And DOT is looking into 295--

COMMISSIONER FOX: Though we don't have the money presently.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --and Deptford was spending money. So we're not -- to the exclusion of road work. I know that you have foresight and you want these things to happen and to make them successful.

As far as the 295 improvements in the Cherry Hill area, is that going to be very expensive or--

COMMISSIONER FOX: Yes. Everything is expensive.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: There you go.

COMMISSIONER FOX: What we're saying is, we have \$75 million we're going to have to pay a year before we can do anything.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Does Gloucester want light rail now?

COMMISSIONER FOX: Quite frankly, everyone might want light rail.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: There you go.

COMMISSIONER FOX: Everyone wants light rail, Assemblywoman. The problem is we can't be in a position--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: And we can't afford it at this point.

COMMISSIONER FOX: --of just giving light rail to everyone because they want it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I agree.

COMMISSIONER FOX: We need to make those tough decisions.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I agree.

COMMISSIONER FOX: If we look around this state, we need to decide where it's needed now and put our resources there now, not hoping that-- We just don't have the funding, the money to be able to just build rail.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: This project is in progress. It's almost complete, and I just heard mixed messages from both of you that you're not happy with the alignment, but you're going to make it work. You're going

to bring it together, etc. I wish you the best, and I will be there. As I know, a number of people in South Jersey will be there to help you make it a success, because the whole premise was -- and what we heard from the very beginning -- South Jersey cannot be ignored. We must pay attention to the people and their needs, and certainly they deserve a boost -- again, not purely for transportation, but economic recovery.

This is the line that Bill said was magnificent 100 years ago. In the past, he showed us empty buildings as we rode along in the train. We rode the line. He knew the difficulties, but he prophesied that we will return to wonderful times in South Jersey if we only give them an opportunity. I think we're, kind of, looking at this in a way of saying, "Oh, it's not good enough. It's good enough." We're already a work in progress.

COMMISSIONER FOX: No, Assemblywoman, we're going to make this work because we're now with a billion dollar project that we have a responsibility to make work. Okay.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, I know that.

COMMISSIONER FOX: We're here saying, we're not going to be frank and say, "We have to learn from the mistakes that were made in the past." There's a lot of things that we all, as adults and elected officials and appointed officials, have to pick up the pieces. That's what we do. And that's why we take the jobs, and that's why we get appointed the jobs.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Assemblywoman, if I could interrupt, I'd like to give some others an opportunity to speak.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry. But I just wanted to say we don't know, in reality, what will happen a year from

now, two years from now. Again, in the beginning, I said, after I heard this morning, it sounded like a search and destroy mission. I'm becoming more optimistic hearing about the work they will do to make this successful. I'll concede to the Chair.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

Yes. There are some other people that have questions.

Assemblyman Wisniewski.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Thank you, Chairman.

I certainly agree with Assemblywoman Heck that we need to have an open mind. I'm just not sure we should always have an open wallet. Because transportation dollars are so scarce, we need to make sure they're used prudently.

Mr. Commissioner, Mr. Director, my question is, when you took over, did you know if there are any-- Are there any standards in place as to how to evaluate projects about potential ridership? And if there aren't, should there be?

MR. WARRINGTON: Yes. The industry has a common set of standards against which capital projects are measured, both costs as well as benefits, normally. The Hudson-Bergen Light Rail project is a very good example. The process was conformed to entirely. What's interesting is that, ultimately, the planning process produced a forecast around demand, because it's a very rigorous process. As a matter of fact, my recollection is that the Hudson-Bergen project planning work had, over time, more than 50 iterations of modeling around demand, as local environment, the situation changed. Those standards do exist.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: But those are industry standards?

MR. WARRINGTON: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Are there any--

COMMISSIONER FOX: Yes. Quite frankly, Assemblyman, there is a process that projects go through, an extensive one. The problem here was it was ignored.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: That's what I was getting-- Should those be codified in a way that make it required to follow those standards?

COMMISSIONER FOX: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Thank you, gentlemen.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Assemblyman Doria.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Yes. I think one of the most interesting parts of this discussion this morning is the issue related, specifically, to the fact that this project is not eligible for Federal funding. My question is, number one, why isn't it eligible for Federal funding? I know some of these answers, but I think it's good to go over it, because it relates to Assemblyman Wisniewski's question as to the criteria, the ability to prioritize these projects. So why do you believe-- You know, never mind believe, why -- it's not eligible for Federal funding. What short-circuited the process that would have made it eligible for Federal funding?

MR. WARRINGTON: Eligibility for Federal funding requires conformance with the Federal planning process. The Federal planning process

is designed to extract, from many, many alternatives, the best project as defined by established Federal criteria.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: So it was because they short-circuited the process? Was that for political reasons or because there was a great deal of opposition, from what you know?

MR. WARRINGTON: I think-- I can only construct what I believe occurred for I don't have first-hand knowledge. What I've been able to piece together and my sense is, as I said earlier, that there was significant frustration with a planning process that produced, under the Federal aegis -- that would have produced a project that would have been difficult to build. That project being difficult to build, either politically or as a consequence of community opposition, by not pursuing one of those alternatives, in effect, precluded use of Federal money. The path of least resistance was then selected and Federal money was, basically, left on the table.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: And that's because, and maybe to simplify it, the alternative process, as it was done in the Hudson-Bergen, coming up with different, various alignments and, then, determining which would be the most practical, based upon the various input from consultants -- let me say most of them are useless -- would end up coming up with the determination that, then, could be presented to the Federal government.

MR. WARRINGTON: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Okay. I think that's important. I think that's one of the issues here. I think it's a serious issue when you look at the fact that this is funded by the State through the Transportation Trust Fund. One of the problems we've had, and I think all of the members who



have been in the Legislature in the past and those of you who haven't -- and that's everyone there -- we lived through the various pains of trying to pass gas tax increases or other forms of increases. And thus, the only way we can come up with the money in the past has been bonding, which now we've gotten to the point where we can't keep on bonding. So the money that comes into the Transportation Trust Fund has to deal with all the other projects, Assemblywoman, that you mentioned and the Commissioner spoke about, whether it be road projects or buying new rail cars or buying new buses. All that has to come out of the Transportation Trust Fund. The future funding of the Transportation Trust Fund is up in the air, because it is so difficult for the Legislature, because we have such an anti-tax bias for good or for bad, that the end result is that we don't have the money. That I think is a concern, and I think that's a legitimate concern from all of our parts.

I have to say that I didn't hear that radio interview this morning, but I usually take things from where they come. If Marty Robins had his way, we'd be running buses up and down the waterfront. So I think he's very happy. We should keep him at Rutgers where all good academics stay and usually talk to themselves. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Anybody?

Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN STENDER: You talked about the ridership projections in terms of what you're going to be re-evaluating and what they are now. You're revisiting them. I think when this decision was made to go forward, the numbers were in the tune of -- what -- 4500 people one way?

MR. WARRINGTON: Yes. About 9300 total trips.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN STENDER: And that's--

MR. WARRINGTON: That's total trips all day in all directions.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN STENDER: All day?

MR. WARRINGTON: About 9300, yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN STENDER: What would the ridership needed to have been in order to have passed muster, let's say, for Federal standards?

MR. WARRINGTON: I can't tell you. I have to go back and look at that, but it would have needed to have been substantially higher than that. I'll tell you, and this is a personal opinion, going back to my own history with South Jersey Transit. But I know from the early days back in the early '90s, when I ran the Delaware River Port Authority, and some of the planning work that was done in the early '90s -- I know that a project, for example, extending the PATCO high-speed system down the Millville or Vineland secondary with a direct route into the Camden Transportation Center and into Philadelphia, without a transfer and substantially relieving congestion on Route 42, the North/South Freeway and Route 55, would have been economically a substantially superior project here.

COMMISSIONER FOX: And, Assemblywoman, if I could, I think what we're trying to say is, if you look around the State of New Jersey, whether it's North Jersey or South New Jersey, to say that this is where we should have built the next rail line is wrong. If you look around, is this where we should have put a billion dollars of State money, if we looked around from top to bottom in this State? Is this where we should have made the investment? We're not saying that it won't work out and it's not worth doing, but is this

where it should have gone before other projects that -- where we have ridership tomorrow morning?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN STENDER: Well, as a freshman legislator, a member of the Transportation Committee, who believes that we should be investing in our transportation infrastructure, and especially in mass transportation, it's interesting to learn all of these pieces, and important for us for the future, because I feel like this is déjà vu after having sat through E-ZPass, because there we had a situation where decisions were made by people who held the public trust and a lot of money was ill spent. We're not getting the return that I think we're all entitled to. So I look forward to trying to resolve some of these issues and learning from the mistakes as we go forward.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Assemblyman Rooney.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: Yes. I just want to, kind of, go over some of the things that were talked about here and what you stated. Was there ever a time that this project would have gotten Federal funds, on any particular route that we actually knew that the ridership -- or that there would have been some way to get Federal funding on this?

MR. WARRINGTON: For this particular alignment?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: No, for any alignment. Do we know, factually, that there would have been an alignment that we could have gotten some Federal funding?

MR. WARRINGTON: Yes. I believe, although you're never quite sure, but I believe that an alignment such as that, which I discussed earlier,

down to Woodbury and perhaps on to Glassboro, and a service which would have eliminated a requirement for a transfer into Philadelphia, perhaps, supplemented by light rail connection from the Camden Transportation Center, just serving the Camden waterfront, probably would have been a better project, from a demand point of view. The economics of it, I would guess -- you never quite know. I would guess that that's a, kind of, a project that would have received substantial Federal support.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: It would have, only, been from Camden down to Glassboro and would not have included the Trenton line?

MR. WARRINGTON: I can't speculate about that. I don't know. The difficulty is that--

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: But we have been speculating, because, basically, we're saying, and we're inferring, that there could have been some alignment that would have been--

MR. WARRINGTON: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: --that would have gotten it. So there has been speculation here all day.

MR. WARRINGTON: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: And that's what I'm hearing -- is that there's a lot of criticism of a previous administration for not doing this, not doing that. I've been in the Legislature 20 years. There's only one person here in the Assembly that's been there longer than me, and that's Joe Doria. We know what the political consequences are when we are told we must do something for South Jersey. The South Jersey delegation comes before us and says, "Look, we want this project." And when the Assembly Speaker happens

to be from South Jersey, and various other members of the leadership happen to be from South Jersey, those are the political considerations. We listen to our colleagues.

There are things that happen in other parts of the State that we're interested in, and we give and take. This was a major project that was put before us by members of the South Jersey legislation. Those are the reasons for it. I don't want to blame the Whitman administration. Basically, the Legislature was the one who decided that these were the projects that would get the priority. These are the ones that were put forward, and it was signed by the Governor and went forward. Go back, you know, would of, should of, could -- they're all things in the past. It's great we're going to do something. A lot of the questions, here, came up of the overruns and everything else. We can't even discuss it, because it's in court. So we've got a project that's here that the Legislature approved, that all of us approved in some way, shape or form that are in politics. I've been trying to get my project for 20-- I think I sat on the first passenger service panel in 1977 as a councilman in my own town, and we still haven't gotten transportation for my area. These are the things that come into place and are done.

There were political reasons for this. That's what it's all about. That's the truth, as they used to say, and that's why this project happened. Let's go on from here. If there are overruns, we'll take care of the overruns. We'll make sure that the project comes in. But all this was approved by a previous administration, previous legislators, and a lot of people down here in Jersey, regardless of political party, were there to say yes. This is what they wanted. The other thing is the alignments that you talked about that may have

gotten all of those Federal dollars. Those alignments were not acceptable to the local governments, and they were vetoed. I think Rose and Joe Doria can attest to that. So they weren't even on the table. This was the project that was on the table. Then this is the one that's approved. Let's go on from here. Let's get it done. That's all I have to say.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to follow up on what Assemblyman Rooney said. No doubt, and I think you heard from the Commissioner and from the Executive Director, that they've got a marketing plan that they're working on. They're studying on how to maximize ridership, because, obviously, it's built, and we need to make it work. I think, from my perspective, as Chairman of the Transportation Committee, and I know what we've heard from our witnesses, everybody wants to make it work. The question today is how do we avoid similar-type situations in the future. It's clear that this project was short-tracked, fast-tracked, however you want to make it, so that it got done. I think what we need to avoid in the future is missing the opportunities to have the Federal dollars that help New Jersey stretch its transportation dollars. Because if we had gotten those Federal dollars, maybe, Assemblyman, that rail project in your district could have gotten done with the extra money we would have left over. But, instead, we're taking a billion dollars of very scarce resources and putting it in the one project. I don't think that's ever happened in the State's history.

The trick for us, for all of us around this table, is not just to make sure that we make good decisions today. It's to make sure that those who come after us make good decisions and to set up the rules and to set up the

process so that it works for today, and for tomorrow, and the future. That's what we haven't had, and that's what we need to get to.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Yes.

Assemblyman Sarlo.

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think we've focused in a lot on the primary need to build mass transit for the immediate need of ridership. I think economic revitalization is a side effect of light rail. That should be something that should come after the fact. We don't build it to spur economic revitalization. I'm assuming, with the amount of money that we spend and with the debt that we've going to be faced with in the future, we probably sacrificed some very critical projects throughout the State of New Jersey, here in South Jersey and throughout the State of New Jersey. Are we currently -- which probably, that I'm aware of, hasn't been done -- but are we working on a master plan for mass transit and road projects throughout the state so we don't run into this situation again?

COMMISSIONER FOX: Yes. One of the things the Governor has asked me to undertake is, we haven't had a transportation master plan in this state since Brendan Byrne was Governor. Actually, it was done by Lou Gambaccini, former Commissioner of Transportation. What we'd like to do is look at all of our transportation needs from rail to roads to bridges. That includes the Turnpike, the Parkway, and how we are going to address-- First of all, identifying the problem and looking at them, not only what needs to be done next year -- what needs to be done the next five, ten, fifteen, twenty years -- and to put that forward to the public and to decision-makers such as

yourself, and say, “This is our transportation master plan, how we’re going to approach it, and we’re going to have limited resources.” And then present to the public, quite frankly, options as to how we get there. I just, to reiterate again -- we need to decide. We need to prioritize our needs and then put a dollar figure next to it and figure, one by one, how we’re going to tackle those. So that’s the master plan I believe will help us go do that.

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: That’s reassuring to know.

And just one quick question for Mr. Warrington. We all agree, we have to move forward and try to solve some problems. I think one hurdle that you’re going to be faced with, that you’ve inherited, is this tracks that are freight and light rail and the need for scheduling -- moving commuters and also putting, moving freight trains. I know we’re going to an entertainment or destination center down in the Camden area, and we all are making an effort as a revitalization of parts of that. How are you going to handle that when, at certain times, when we have to shut off and strictly go to freight trains?

MR. WARRINGTON: The deal on the South Jersey Light Rail is that after 10:00 p.m. and before 6:00 a.m. freight operations will occur. So, in a sense, light rail and freight are time-separated. They can’t run on the same track at the same time. The good news, though, is that one of the things that the deal does provide for is that there is a substantial park-and-ride at the Camden-Pennsauken border of 36th Street. We are permitted to run shuttles virtually 24 hours a day between the Camden waterfront and that park-ride. So there’s some measure of benefit associated with that.

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.



ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Are there any other questions by members?

Assemblyman Burzichelli.

ASSEMBLYMAN BURZICHELLI: Thank you, Chairman.

This is a rare occasion, especially when I'm either serving with or in the company of Joe Doria, which I get to bring some historical perspective to an issue. (laughter) We usually rely on Assemblyman Doria to help us and to guide us.

Mr. Chairman, in this case, I'd like to make just a contribution of looking back, not to the point necessarily of being critical, but as we learn to go forward. We've heard a discussion about another state master plan, which hasn't been done in so many years. It's a wise move. Good planning is going to bring good results.

I want to say to Mr. Warrington, for a person who has just recently come on, you really have hit some of this on the head. I served as a mayor in a Gloucester County community and was privileged to be in the discussions when the Gloucester County leg of this was discussed. There was initial opposition -- initial opposition, because there was not exhaustive meetings. There was not exhaustive community input. And that desperately needed leg that would have occurred to serve from Woodbury to either Glassboro, possibly down to Vineland and Millville, which could have arguably brought this into compliance for Federal assistance-- I believe, personally, had our leaders had the political courage to fully engage the public, that we would have had a different discussion.

I would suggest, in hindsight, and it's only hindsight, and I was there, and no one else in this room was there for those meetings and that discussion-- So I know what was said, and I know the lack of effort made to take the next step that we, as elected officials, have the courage to take when it comes to engaging the public -- I have to say didn't happen, and I was there. I would suggest, because I happen to be not only an advocate of rail transportation, I happen to be also a personal friend of the Mayor of this fine city-- But this leg, which is viewed as one of the one, two, three legs that have been discussed, that maybe had we married that Gloucester route where we have ridership, where we have clear congestion, where we can demonstrate a need, we were likely to qualify for the Federal component. Had we married that with this northern run, initially, that we may have been able to leverage Federal funds, still have built this leg, come in at a cheaper rate, and been able to make it all work. But that discussion never occurred, because the leadership at that time did not take it to the public. And again, I was there.

That discussion was never exhausted with the exception of a few mayors in a room. It never extended past that point, and I remember the day when our delegation left the room and said, "If you don't want it, it will just get built on the northern side." The discussion stopped. That's a real lesson that I learned as a leader, now as an elected official serving in the State Assembly. We must have the courage to have this public discussion. I think we could have done all of this, and I think we could have, likely, have done it with Federal money and made the northern leg and the southern leg happen at one time. But we never had the chance to discuss that. It doesn't reflect on those who are sitting on the Committee, because you were being driven by the

voices coming back from the leaders at the time. You worked with what you had.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: We had meetings, Mayor, and I never received any information or requests from you to have additional meetings in your area.

ASSEMBLYMAN BURZICHELLI: That's because--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: We were very willing to hear all sides of the issue and made it known. I know Senator Haines did the same thing. So maybe you were limited in your information, and you're saying that we did not exhaust. We had meetings.

ASSEMBLYMAN BURZICHELLI: I'm not saying you did not exhaust. I'm saying--

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Excuse me. If your dialogue could go through me--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN BURZICHELLI: Yes, of course, and through the Chair.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN BURZICHELLI: And through the Chair, what I'm saying is--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I felt, Mr. Chairman, that you allowed him the courtesy.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: At least give me the courtesy to say we did hold public meetings, and we did receive letters from certain mayors. Mayor Burzichelli was not one of them, to my knowledge.

ASSEMBLYMAN BURZICHELLI: And through the Chair, and I would never sit here to correct my colleague, but I'll say again, through the Chair, that that process was incomplete. Our leadership, who we relied on, did not initiate, nor go that second step past a-- There were two meetings, very limited meetings. The information taken from those meetings -- the individual who was our representative at the time, in my opinion, through the Chair, drew conclusions that were incomplete conclusions. Those incomplete conclusions have led to a billion dollar project which, in my opinion, is not complete. This line works better for the people of New Jersey and the expenditure of our tax money had that leg to Glassboro been included.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I agree.

ASSEMBLYMAN BURZICHELLI: My point. What I'm saying is, one of the lessons here is that we, as political elected officials, must have courage. I'm not suggesting anyone in this room doesn't, but I'm saying that a price was paid here. Because that process and that run to Glassboro, I'm telling you, was not complete and the public was not included as they should have been. So I just offer that as a historical perspective, on a rare occasion when I can do that when I'm with my distinguished colleague, Joe Doria.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

A follow up question, Chairman Doria.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Obviously, I'm familiar with what took place in Hudson and the amount of time, and the numbers of meetings, and

the disagreements, and the back and forth. As Assemblywoman Heck remembers, the conflict began in the late '80s and went through the early '90s.

So, Assemblyman Burzichelli, in Hudson we did have a lot of conflict. But in the end, everyone was forced to deal with the final alignment as it was.

My question, and I think the last question is-- We haven't really gotten involved in the overruns that we should have, because that's part of the court case. But when this contract was awarded, was it done in any way different than the Hudson-Bergen contract, or other contracts? I mean, do they follow the same procedures?

MR. WARRINGTON: Pretty much, Assemblyman. The procurement process was, as I understand it, virtually similar. There was preliminary engineering done and there was a performance spec that was, basically, put together. There was a competitive process, and all proposals were evaluated first on technical capability and scored, and then subsequently, on their financial proposal. I think what was different here was the application of criteria associated with the evaluation of the project benefits -- Federal versus non-Federal, which is very different. That was an intensive process in Hudson-Bergen, as you say, for a long, long time. The demand-modeling and forecasting was also done in a very quick and dirty way on the South Jersey project, contrasted with the extensive modeling that was done on Hudson-Bergen.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Any other questions? (no response)

Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to take a five-minute break. At exactly five minutes after 12:00, we'll resume the hearing.

Let me interrupt for just a minute. The next two speakers-- I'd like to have Mayor Costello and Assemblyman Conaway speak after the break.

**(RECESS)**

**AFTER RECESS:**

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to resume the hearing.

Assemblyman Conaway, is he in the room? (no response)

As we go forward, I have 13 or 14 people that are going to testify. What I would ask is, if at all possible, to please keep your remarks as brief as you possibly can, as we go forward. The next person is Assemblyman Herb Conaway.

**A S S E M B L Y M A N H E R B C O N A W A Y:** Good morning, Chairman Connors, Chairman Doria, Chairman Wisniewski, and other distinguished members of the Legislature. I thank you for bringing this legislative hearing to my home town and taking up an issue that you know, Jack, you and I as candidates, this is one of the big issues that we faced back in 1997 in seeking to serve in the Legislature. We, of course, have been wrestling with it, really, since then.

I think that some history is important to review here. History, if it does nothing for us, should guide the future, and hopefully, will prevent repeating mistakes that, I think, run right through this project from the beginning, and even until now. After being elected, we met with, then, Mr. Russo, who was then head of Rail Construction, and asked him about the costs and other aspects of this project, as part of our advocacy on the part of the people that we represent here in this district. He told us at that time that this project would cost about \$450 million. We've, sort of, run right past that \$450 million at that time, and as we've heard from the Commissioner and Executive Director today, this project is going to be about a billion dollars.

The other interesting things about this project, when we talked about its costs and we researched it, we looked at these projects across the country. We looked at the question of economic development, because that was one of the big things that was being touted as the great benefit of this line. We were puzzled and surprised to find that there were few of those projects which ever delivered on the promise of economic development. I hope that Hudson-Bergen will be different, because it certainly will help the-- It's important that rail, when it's used -- it's an important, nice side effect of investments in transportation infrastructure if economic development follows.

We also looked at how these things were put together and the ridership questions. I'm glad, again, to hear our distinguished Commissioner and Executive Director talk about the problems with ridership that we raised, as you know, during our campaign and after being elected to office, that the ridership projections would never be met. And indeed, I think with the things

that we've heard here from our transportation experts, we find some vindication there.

I don't know about you, Jack, but I feel vindicated by very much of what our distinguished Commissioner and Executive Director said. Because so many of the issues that we raised at the time regarding cost, regarding the economic development issues have been echoed, and the poor planning, have been echoed here by our Commissioner.

Let's talk about the planning and how we got to this alignment. What did we hear from the Commissioner? That the, usually, planning rules that were applied to projects like this by the Federal government were not followed in this case. I think -- I hope the press, and I hope others ask, why were those planning routines not followed? Why were the fact that transfers have to take place not included in the ridership projections? I think, as Assemblyman Rooney pointed out, that there was a political imperative that seemed to be the first priority in this project, and not safeguarding the public money.

Frustration has been mentioned -- is not a reason in my mind to spend a billion dollars of taxpayers money on an ill-conceived, poorly planned project. You, and Assemblyman Burzichelli, and I, and the South Jersey delegation stand second to none in making sure that South Jersey gets its fair share of transportation dollars. And as our state grows, in order to maintain liveability here and in one of the most densely populated states in the nation, one of the most developed states in the nation, having investments in the transportation infrastructure are going to be so important to maintaining the kind of quality of life that our folks deserve. But to put transportation projects



on the ground without planning -- planning that denies us the ability to get Federal funding so that we can help save taxpayers dollars, I think, is the wrong approach.

I was very happy to hear that the Transportation Commissioner is doing what the other administration did not do, in bringing planning and prioritization to the development of our transportation infrastructure. I think that we do have this project on the ground, and it's unfortunate that we're going to be spending \$48 million, actually \$73 million, at the outset of the Transportation Trust Fund over the next several years, money that might be used for additional, other important transportation projects in South Jersey and, indeed, throughout the State on this, again, ill-conceived and poorly planned project. But here it is, and we have to do the best that we can.

I would respectfully request that the Committee, in its deliberations moving forward, look at a couple of issues. As a parent of two small children who live two blocks off the line, and one on a tricycle and another on a bike, I do hope that you will take and apply more attention to the issues of safety, because I think they're very important, I know, to parents like myself up and down this line. This line, as you know, runs next to playgrounds, next to school grounds. There are issues of the movement of emergency vehicles across the line that I hope that this Committee will address and by way of helping to make this project the best that it can be.

I hope you also look at questions of noise that I think are going to be very important to our residents along this line. There are bells that must be rung as grade crossings are approached. Perhaps there are changes in Federal

rules and others that will help ameliorate some of the noise questions, and we need to look at that.

I also hope that you will do all you can to foster a partnership between the Transportation Department and local officials here. I think you'll hear from some of them about this partnership and making that partnership work for other towns that move forward. I'm also very pleased to hear that the Transportation Department will be looking at ways to help drive some of the economic development that I know is hoped for this project.

So, by way of closing, just let me say that I'm one who supports transportation, know how important it is to livability of our state, and important for those with disabilities to be able to get to and fro. As this state grows and more people come here -- we're projected to see another million people living in our state before too long -- that those issues of mass transportation, and moving around this state, and keeping this state one where people want to live and work and play, that mass transportation is going to be an important part of that. But let's do it with careful planning, and let's let the needs of mass transit drive these projects, not political considerations or economic development considerations that have led to this, again, poorly planned and ill-conceived project here in this district.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Any questions?

Assemblyman Rooney.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: I have to disagree with a lot of what was said. I want to ask a question as to what you consider poor planning?

ASSEMBLYMAN CONAWAY: Do you want me to answer that question?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: Yes, definitely.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONAWAY: Well, I think that if, as the Commissioner said, when you don't follow the Federal guidelines on planning, the planning guidelines, as has been pointed out--

Well, Rose--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: That's not what he said.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONAWAY: Tell me what he said then, because I was sitting here too.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: He said--

Oh, I'm sorry. It's his question.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Why doesn't everybody work their comments through the Chair?

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Time out, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: I did ask the question, through the Chair.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONAWAY: Well--

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: The problem that I have with that is that, when I did ask the Commissioner and also the head of New Jersey Transit, basically they said that they really couldn't give me an absolute answer that any one of these alignments would have been able to get us Federal funding. There was no definite answer. The other problem was that the political consideration that you're talking about -- (cell phone rings) I'm sorry, I will turn that off-- The political considerations that you're talking about are political considerations of individual communities along the original alignment that might have -- mind my words, might have -- qualified this as a

Federally funded project. Those communities didn't want it, and they said very clearly they don't want it in their community.

The other thing we're talking about, the only alignment they were saying that might have qualified was Camden down to Glassboro -- had nothing to do with Trenton. We were told by the political leaders in this area, in South Jersey, that they really wanted a link from Camden to Trenton, and that's why this project went forward. I spoke to Pete McDonough. Excuse me, he was at the Governor's office before, and Senator Haines, basically, had said at that time that there would be no capital plan going through the Senate unless this was approved, these plans were approved. The administration was pretty much forced into it by the politicians that represented you in this district.

So, as far as what we're saying, political considerations -- there were local political considerations. Municipalities didn't want light rail in their community. There were considerations at the level for the State, and there are considerations at the Governor's level. But basically, the Governor, the administration were told that the politicians in this area wanted this project. They wanted it desperately. And for 20 years that I've been in the Legislature, I've heard, "South Jersey needs this. South Jersey never gets this. South Jersey needs this." This was a priority for the South Jersey legislators. It's like 20-20 hindsight.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONAWAY: Am I going to get a chance to answer this question?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: I'm answering the question.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONAWAY: Am I going to get a chance to answer what -- these questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: I would hope so.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Go ahead, Assemblyman. Go ahead.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONAWAY: I think the original question to me was a question about planning. Of course, people can sit in a room and they can hear different things. Well, I heard the Commissioner, the Executive Director say that when you plan these projects, there are Federal guidelines that direct the planning. And what I heard him say, also, that those Federal guidelines were not followed, and indeed, what did the State of New Jersey do? It put in its own planning process and its own process for environmental review, a process which, since we didn't vote for the Federal planning process, did not allow this particular project to qualify for Federal funding. That Federal funding -- not getting that Federal funding means that the taxpayers of New Jersey are footing the bill for this entire project, and now it's a one billion dollar project, and that pressure is squeezing out, we were told by the Commissioner and as mentioned by other folks on this panel, squeezing out other transportation priorities. Now, I think that that is an important consideration going forward.

Now, the retort I got was that perhaps none of the planning, none of the alignments might have passed muster. Well, I think that's a different question than the question that was originally asked of me. What I heard the Executive Director say and the Commissioner said, that certain alignments were not looked at and studied fully. That's what I heard, and I'll go back to

the record and will point that out to you, because I was listening very carefully, in the back, to what these two gentlemen from the Department said.

Now, you talked about political considerations. Political considerations did, in fact, play a role. As Rose pointed out in her historical review, the original alignment was supposed to run from Mt. Holly through Moorestown. Now, one of the questions that might be asked is why didn't the alignment go there? Was there political opposition? Perhaps. The path of least resistance was taken. I'll say again, frustration with planning and frustration with needing to get a project in South Jersey, and I support -- I think all of us from South Jersey certainly support transportation dollars coming to South Jersey -- that frustration doesn't relieve people in charge of the responsibility of spending taxpayers money as best they can and in order to meet the priorities of transportation for everyone, including this region and throughout the state. That's the statement that I made.

Any other questions, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you, Assemblyman.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONAWAY: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: The next two speakers -- I have Ann Burns and Pamela Reid from Resources For Independent Living.

**A N N B U R N S:** Good afternoon. I'm Ann Burns. I'm with Resources For Independent Living in Riverside.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Ann, thank you so much for coming today.

MS. BURNS: Well, thank you for allowing this forum for us to have conversation with you and to impress you with our needs. Our agency

serves individuals with disabilities across all ages, across all disabilities. We offer information and referral. We offer advocacy, and we offer peer support. But we can't do that if we can't get clients to our offices. To invalidate this project in any way is to invalidate the lives of people with disabilities in our county. Because in May of 2000, we attended a ground-breaking ceremony that promised us a light rail.

Light rail to people with disabilities means transportation that is convenient, that's comfortable. It's safe, and it's reliable. It allows people with disabilities to access education, work, their doctors, their families, and shopping. We did, as a community of people with disabilities, plan on development around the light rail track too, so that we could connect to the community and stay in the community.

What we're looking for in transportation, always, is options for independence. There is transportation out there that serves some of the needs of people with disabilities. I don't expect any one system, nor do we as a community expect any one system, to serve all of our needs, but we do want a priority when transportation needs are considered.

If you need to know numbers of seniors and people with disabilities who are now using existing systems, contact local citizens paratransit for seniors and the disabled. Contact New Jersey Transit Access Link and see how many numbers of people with disabilities are looking for rides every day. But also be aware that there are limitations to both of these systems, and they don't serve anyone's needs every day in every way. That's not what we're looking for. But we're looking for options for independence.

I am not only a woman with a disability, I am the mother of a person with a disability. I'm a wife. I'm a mother. I'm a woman who works, and I want all these options. Some systems for people with disabilities would not permit me to take my child along with me. Aren't I allowed, as a person with a disability, to have a child and to need to transport myself where I need to go in a timely manner in which I choose to go?

Some of the systems for people with disabilities require a reservation the day before. Now, that doesn't seem as though it's a great inconvenience. For those of you who have the option of independence of going out to your driveway and getting into your car, it makes an enormous difference if you want bread and milk from the store and you have to make a reservation the day before to get it.

I would also remind all of us who, like myself, were born after January 1, 1946, that we're baby boomers. We've already discussed at length congestion, emissions, the cost of fossil fuels, and the fact that they're disappearing. We've already discussed the lack of parking. No one seems to touch on the cost of a car or the cost of car insurance. For those who are part of we, who are graying out in America, these are going to become larger and larger concerns. Fifty-five percent of seniors will experience, for instance, alone, significant vision loss. They will be mobile seniors, but they will lose their ability to drive and will need to depend on better and better mass transportation. You can't wait until the baby boomers retire to put that into place. It needs to be there, up and running.

When people are reluctant, and I'm talking about seniors or people with disability, to utilize a new system, then marketing is a key factor. Mr.



Warrington from New Jersey Transit talked about marketing, a circular fare system, links to other systems, and, also, I strongly believe in travel training. I know that people with disabilities, with travel training, and seniors, too, will utilize the rail system more and more every month, more and more every year, more and more every decade as communities build up around the rail line.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

**P A M E L A R E I D:** My name is Pam Reid. I'm the Director of Resources for Independent Living. I'd just like you to know some things that have been going on. Because, from what I've heard at this meeting, we're talking about this baby of a light rail system as though it were a failure and already dead. We want to make sure that this doesn't happen elsewhere in the country. The reality is, we in the community haven't accepted that at all. In fact, it was a shock to us that you're having this hearing.

The way it's worked with us is, people with a disability, people who are seniors really have a trilogy leg that's necessary for us to be included in the community. The State, on every level, is seeking that inclusion. It needs transportation. It needs housing, and it needs jobs. Those three things are the holy trilogy that not only make the disability community work, but make all communities work. So, what we've done as an organization is, we've located along this light rail line for the express purpose of having this absolutely accessible transportation available to us on both the bus line and, now, rail line.

In addition to that, we've been working very hard with the townships and with people and businesses along that rail line. What we're

doing the first year, this year, is we're focusing on housing -- to build accessible housing, to get dollars involved in helping people keep in their homes, stay in their homes, because now you've got housing and transportation. The jobs -- there's industrial parks all along this line. It's a unique opportunity in that these things already exist. They're already here. All we have to do is include this new idea of inclusion in the expansion of those facilities. This is the first time we've had that opportunity, certainly in South Jersey. We intend to make the most of it. We, as a community, not government agencies, not groups from the outside, but we the people that live here -- not only do we intend to use it, but we intend to utilize it to rebuild the communities.

I've heard a couple things that have really surprised me relating to safety. This light rail is along a four-lane highway. I mean, it's right along a four-lane highway. It's not like it's out in the middle of nothing. We wouldn't tell our children to go play anywhere near there. That would be insane. The rail line is just an extension, by however many feet along, of that road. So I don't see that as a major problem. We've already trained our children not to play in traffic.

I think we've all sat down and agonized, and we did have plenty of public hearings about this. We heard pros and we heard cons, and everybody threw their ideas in the hat. We worked very hard to create a workable system. What I really don't want to see happen in this group is that we look at this light rail line as a failure before it ever has a chance to begin. Because all the talk, all the -- what looks to be bipartisan -- issues way down the line is truly affecting those people that are trying to make this line succeed,

that are trying to make our community succeed in a way that we never had the opportunity before, because that leg was missing.

You can go up and down the light rail line construction now and begin to see industry developing. You can begin to see all these things happen. As long as there's groups like ours and there's people of good will who are in the community to make that all work and make it accessible to all of us, we have a dream that we couldn't even have envisioned 10 years ago. For that, I'd like to thank whoever made this possible for us.

I don't have a list of names. I don't have the history. All I know is we're grateful for the opportunity, and we'd like to thank you for it. We'd like to see this opportunity expand. All of Human Services -- all your Human Service dollar money, all your Department of Labor money that goes into vocational rehabilitation, it all depends on projects exactly like this one that can create the opportunity for people to get to the places that they need to go inexpensively, reliably, dependably, and without much fuss. There's no chance in anybody asking a person for -- of coming to a person with disabilities now and saying, "Okay, what kind of subsidies do you need to get to work?" They get on the train and they go to work. There's no subsidies. They're absolutely independent.

It is the gift, the gift to all of society. We don't have to make Access Link arrangements beforehand. We don't have to explain if this is -- if our 50th wedding anniversary is a necessity or it's just something we want to do, to go to transportation with our wives. You get a ticket and you get on the train and you go. It's that simple. The quality-of-life differences on a rail line are huge, huge. Somebody has to be in front of you saying, "This matters to

the people in the community that are working without any kind of partisan affiliation.” We’re out there working to build better communities. We hope you hear us. All of you.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Mr. Chairman, I certainly can sympathize with the witness. One of the unhappy dilemmas of government is that if -- perhaps, in a mythical society, we could say yes to everybody, and perhaps, in a society where money is never an issue, we can build light rail and transportation projects everywhere and anywhere there’s a need. The dilemma for government always is one of rationing scarce resources, and dollars, more than ever, are a scarce resource.

So no one is here saying that we want to deny opportunities to the handicapped. Nobody is here saying that we don’t want those people who need these types of transportation facilities to not have them. What we are here saying is that there has been a lack of candor and a lack of reality in the way we spend dollars in this state.

My own personal experience over the last six months with E-ZPass, and in fact, in the last six years in the Legislature with E-ZPass, time and time again when a question was asked about, “Are the projections real?” -- the prior administration continued to say, “Just trust us. They’re real,” when in fact they were created of whole cloth. That’s the issue that’s here, is that we want to make sure that there are realistic projections and realistic expectations, so that when we take those dollars that just don’t fall from the sky and we expend them, that we’re getting the most bang for our buck. That’s what this hearing

is about. It's not about denigrating what's here. You've heard the Commissioner and you're heard the Executive Director say that they want to make this work. There's a billion dollars of taxpayers' money in it, and it's got to work, and we've got to get a return on it. But what we have to make sure is that we don't have very expensive success stories in the future. We want to have them priced at a level that everybody can afford.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

You know, when I called-- I'm reflecting back on when I called for these hearings. I confess that as you listen to people testify that there's a feeling -- and I don't know whether it was Ms. Burns or Ms. Reid said -- we're speaking about this as if it's a dismal failure. In a way, I'm sorry to hear that. But, at the same time, and I have said this before, it is being built. It is just about finished. The idea is to -- the situation we have now is to make it a success. I guess make lemonade out of lemons, if you will, and deal with this. But I have always felt from the beginning that there were some issues. Since 1997, even before they began, I was meeting with people. I was meeting with people at 36th and River Road in the Pennsauken-Camden border who were concerned about-- There's an elementary school there. They were concerned about the park-and-ride lot that was going to be built and their children and their homes that back on the park-and-ride lot.

I met with those people and we talked about their concerns. I met with people in Riverton. I walked and marched up and down River Road with people in Riverton, and their concern was that the elementary school is on one side of the tracks, and the children will have to cross those tracks to get to the

school. Now, New Jersey Transit has been out, and I've even attended classes with the children, where New Jersey Transit comes out and brings videos. They bring coloring books. They talk about the trains and how to recognize the train.

Ladies and gentlemen, when you look at those trains, sometimes you can't tell which direction it's going in. There are lights. There are indicators. But when you look at the front of the train and you look at the back of the train, if you're a child, you may not be sure which way that train is going. There's no fences to block it. Now all that said, this light rail -- it is just about finished. It will be there. We're going to make the best of the situation.

But I go back to, we want to put the mass in mass transportation. The idea of having these hearings is to make sure that, as we go forward and we look at future projects, that we look back and say, "What could we do better in that particular project? What could we have done better?" and bring it to the new projects as they come forward. Because when you spend a billion dollars, you have to move people. We won't be moving them initially. And even the projections into the next 10 years are very, very modest, in terms of the number of people. I want to move people. I want to move handicapped people. I want to move all of us, everyone, as best I can, but let's get the mass in mass transit.

I apologize for--

Is there any other--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Yes, Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I have to interject. You're referring to this project as we want to make lemonade out of lemons. I do not consider this project a lemon. So to say we're going to do our best -- and all the implications are today this is a terrible project. It's not going to do any good. So we're going to try to do our best and establish new guidelines. New guidelines are fine, and we can investigate every, every project, including Secausus Transfer, and find little worms in that. I will say to you that there is a benefit to every project. But my feeling is, here, that we do not have the DBOM guy here because we are in a lawsuit situation. We shouldn't be here discussing this at all. We should wait until that lawsuit is over. That's fine. That's my opinion.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Assemblywoman, if I could--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Billions going into Camden every year--

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Assemblywoman.  
Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --we say it's fine.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Assemblywoman, if I could interrupt you for just a minute.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: We don't investigate Camden all the time.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: We have a lot of people who would like to speak.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I'm frustrated listening to you deriding this project.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: I understand, and I share your frustration--

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: We're all frustrated, too.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: --but I would like everyone to have an opportunity to speak.

Next on the agenda is the Mayor of Burlington City, Herman Costello.

**MAYOR HERMAN T. COSTELLO:** Good afternoon.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Mayor, I just want to reiterate, thank you for hosting, being the host and sitting here and allowing us to be here today.

MAYOR COSTELLO: We thank you for taking the time to come visit our lovely city, even though downtown looks like it's a battle zone, because of all the development down there, including light rail. Anyway, I'm delighted you chose to have your hearing in Burlington. I thank you all for taking your time to come here.

I left, on your desk, a tour planner. If you look through it, it tells you what we were, what we are, and what we aspire to be. Burlington is an old community. This year we are celebrating our 325th anniversary. Actually, we're five years older than Philadelphia. In regards to what our future might be when we envision what have you-- Let me just say, when the light rail, when it became obvious that it was going to happen, there was no oversight, no Federal funding. Burlington, we the governing body, including myself, played a rather passive role to see where the chips were going to fall. Then when it became obvious it was going to happen, we decided, well, let's go with



it and hope that we can get everything and more that we aspire to. So to make this dream of ours, to make Burlington this tourist attraction in South Jersey-- We have all the amenities. We're trying to put it all together.

To date, we've spent millions and millions of dollars of city money, millions and millions of dollars of State, millions and millions of dollars of Federal money to make this become a reality. But then, you know, we realize, it was mentioned, we riverfront communities are all industrial towns. We are one of them. We are a blue-collar town. Our demographics aren't all that great. We are trying to improve upon that and make Burlington become what -- again, the destination point of South Jersey.

The railroad, when we heard about the light rail -- was going to help you, was going to revitalize your town, bring people through your community. That remains to be seen, but I believed it. I had a lot of people telling me it. To date, we've managed to attract a lot of young couples who've moved from other areas into Burlington because of the light rail. Still I had doubts. Several of us had doubts.

We traveled to Baltimore to observe, to take a look at their light rail system, and lo and behold, we had an opportunity to speak to a lot of their travelers and senior citizens, as well as young folks. And to a man, they said we had our doubts. We opposed it. Now we didn't know what we would do without it. So that was, perhaps, the convincer. I believe that Burlington needed that. We need it in order to bring the folks here that, hopefully, will come here with disposable income. Our downtown was crying for help. We have, in my opinion, the most attractive riverfront in all of South Jersey. We

spent millions of dollars on creating promenades, laying red bricks, and we have the atmosphere. We have the potential.

You read that book. You can spend four hours here on a tour, you can spend an hour. That's the direction we have to go in. We're no longer an industrial town. We are down to one major industry, and they employed -- they went from 1200 to 400 people. So we can't rely on that anymore. We're bringing in some other type of commercial activity, but not the heavy industry that we once were and enjoy.

So having said that, I'd like to share with you some of the problems that we experienced, in this whole two to three years of involvement, and hope we can resolve one of our concerns before they leave Burlington. My experience has been, over the years, that once they get out of town, forget it. Well, they're getting close to that point. They're going to get out of town. They're working now in the part of town. They've finished the bridge. I kind of suspect, before long, they'll be up in Florence, if they're not there already.

A couple of weeks ago, I took a tour of the construction in the various communities, from Camden to Burlington. I'm convinced, there's no doubt in my mind, including Camden, there's no community going to be impacted by this light rail like we are in Burlington. The good side I've already shared with you. But I can tell you this, our lifestyle in Burlington is going to be changed dramatically. You heard talk, comments about schools on one side. We've got schools on both sides of the tracks. We have fire companies, emergency squads, and we've got seven crossings. Burlington is going to be lit up like a Christmas tree.

These are the things that I had to assume some of the blame. Maybe I should have asked more questions. But the problem I have with the way this whole thing was handled is the planning. When they came to town, explained certain things to us, it sounded good. Something like, you know, we could embrace and live with, but it never materialized, never materialized. We, the engineer and myself, had an opportunity to walk the line from Main Street to the bridge, the Burlington Bristol Bridge, with a group from the West Coast. I don't know what their job was, what their function was, but they started to point out, "This is what we're going to do here, do there, and what have you." I didn't quite understand it all. But when we get down to the bridge, they said we're going to buy that building over there. A little white building that used to be a liquor store and a furniture refinisher. I said, "Why are you going to buy that?" "For parking." I said, "You're out of your mind. It will only hold 20 cars." But this is the main stop in Burlington, the main one. We're the only one that has two stops and maybe you'll get a third. But most of the people on the riverfront are going to be traveling into Burlington to catch the light rail at the main stop.

So when I pointed it out to the gentlemen, and I said why are you doing that? "Yes, well, that's the only thing available." I said, look down there a hundred yards. You never even thought of that. We own the ground. There is enough acreage there -- we couldn't sell it for any other purpose, we tried -- but there is enough ground there to accommodate 400 cars. So they took that back to New Jersey Transit or whomever. They called us and said they were interested. We said we'll lease it to you. Fine.

Two years later, they came back with three or four attorneys, very short meeting. They said, "We're interested in the ground. We're going to buy it. And if you resist, we'll take the right of eminent domain." Now that's no way to do business, folks. You sit on something for two years. We wanted to lease it to them. Granted we could use the money, but the selling price was not all that great. So, again, we acquiesced, hoping that we could get something out of them anyway, other than the money. So, as the progress took place, went along, we found that, my God, and I did not envision this, that four corners of every intersection on the seven crossings were dug up, not once, not twice, three times. There's enough hardware on Main Street, Broad Street now to sink a ship. But nevertheless, realizing it's going to happen, we acquiesced and figured again we have some other concerns that needed addressing that they can do.

They did accommodate some of those concerns in regards to landscaping, removing heavy brush from the rail station, and now they're reluctant to complete the job. That is, the other half of the main station, the bridge approach, still is only half done. We need some landscaping to clean it up on the other side of the bridge. But that is not the major problem. It's a problem. It's unsightly. It conceals our industrial park, and we'd like the people to see that, because there's still some acreage there that can be developed. But the main problem is downtown -- the main intersection, High and Broad, where the second station is going to be. This is, like, about a quarter of a mile away from the other one -- half a mile anyway. Now they're going to remove parking places from every corner, as many as eight at every intersection.

At the main intersection, High and Broad, they have a bus stop. They plan to continue to leave that bus stop there. Now, when they built this one downtown, they reduced it from three lanes to one, and the bus stop is in that area. I can guarantee that bus stop will not be there. They intend to use the bus stop. What we have now is buses, trucks coming off the bridge, cars -- that's a kiss-and-ride station. They'll be backed all over the street creating, in my opinion, a tremendous traffic problem. We can't afford to police it, don't intend to police it all day.

So there's a piece of ground there, and this is what I'm asking you to give us some direction and, hopefully, you can be helpful to us. There's a parcel of ground there that's available to them. We met with some of the public relations folks early on. They said, "This makes sense. What else do you want?" That's all we want, that parking lot for the kiss-and-ride people. And believe it or not, there are going to be people who are going to park there illegally and still use it, not as a kiss-and-ride, but go wherever for a couple of hours and come back, because they don't want to go down by the bridge. Now, if that ground is not made available to us, any benefits we may have gained on this -- we will gain from this light rail are going to be negated by the fact that they created something that's going to change our quality of life like we never envisioned. It's going to be bad enough now with seven crossings. It's going to affect one whole generation of people to get used to it. I feel very strongly that it behooves someone to say, let's look at this thing.

I know, I've heard all morning -- talking about money, money, money. But that's planning. We didn't plan that. We didn't even ask for this. And you're going to leave this city in worst condition than when you

found it, and that disturbs me to no end, to walk, to say, "We're through. We'll walk away and leave the problem in the hands of the mayor and the Common Council."

So that's about it, ladies and gentlemen. Hopefully we can find a solution to that. Yes, I'm asking you to find more money and spend it. I can't say that-- It's beyond me to say, "Well, I regret that, and I'll accept that." I won't. Somebody did some planning. Somebody came up with the money. Come up with a little for whatever it costs. I'm talking about a couple of hundred thousand dollars to buy that piece of ground. We'll maintain it. It'll be our lot.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Chairman Doria.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Yes. I just want to say, as a fellow mayor, and having lived with the light rail construction in the city of Bayonne, Mayor Costello, I think that what you need to do -- I think that there are problems. There always are problems as the construction takes place. But I've found that if you chase New Jersey Transit sufficiently and work with them, and if necessary, beat them up--

Pat O'Connor is in the back. He represents New Jersey Transit. I think you can talk to Pat. Maybe with some of the issues -- raise your hand, Pat, he's back there -- maybe he can go back to New Jersey Transit so they can deal with Bechtel, which is the company building, because obviously some of the issues you bring up are very important, and they relate to the quality of life of your citizens and to the total community. I would think that they would want to solve these problems, because they're going to create operating problems for them in the future, which means they'll have a negative impact

on the operation of the system. So I would say that the operational issues -- you should deal with New Jersey Transit and try to deal with some of the issues that they've presented.

Let me assure you, they make mistakes. I think you pointed out the parking issue. But I found, in the past, if you go and talk to them and chase them a little, they usually follow up and then get on the contractor, which in this incidence is Bechtel. The only difference is -- it seems like Bechtel is having more problems down here than the 21st Century has had in the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail. Now, I can't address myself to the uniqueness of the situation down here, because I haven't dealt with that contractor, but the 21st Century has always tried to be cooperative. Given the conflict between Bechtel and New Jersey Transit that may not be true. But I do think you have some legitimate issues, and as mayor, you should be expecting some answers in solving some of the those problems.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Perhaps the Joint Committee can pass a resolution to ask for follow-through by New Jersey Transit. And the Attorney General's Office came in-- The attorneys that come in for property, come from the AG's Office. And they can be very cumbersome.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: And nasty.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: And nasty.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: You mean arrogant.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: And nasty.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Your points are well taken, and I think the Joint Committee members would be pleased to assist you in getting some attention given to the City of Burlington.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Yes. I agree. I think Chairman Wisniewski and the Light Rail Panel, all of us would be there to help you, Mayor Costello. And obviously, your Assemblymen, Assemblyman Conners, Assemblyman Conaway, and Senator Allen, hopefully, would be able to be helpful in dealing with these issues.

MAYOR COSTELLO: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: We will do that, Mayor. Knowing you personally and, of course, knowing the city, I don't think anyone has worked harder than you have for this city. Those of you who aren't from Burlington City, the light rail is running through the heart of the historic district. It's a historic district that it's running through. So the frustrations that, I think that, the mayor has shown today, I guess is-- A lot has happened. As you said, a whole generation of people are going to have to get used to the change in their life, but we will address that.

MAYOR COSTELLO: Okay. One closing statement, Assemblyman Conners.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Yes.

MAYOR COSTELLO: We've already discussed this with light rail, New Jersey Transit. They said, in no uncertain terms, "Forget about it." Well, for those of you who know me, I don't forget easy and--

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Mayor, may I suggest your Police Department shut the project down for a day or two.



MAYOR COSTELLO: I'm delighted at your comments.

(laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: They'll pay attention. That's what I do sometimes, if you need to do it.

MAYOR COSTELLO: Okay. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you, Mayor.

MAYOR COSTELLO: Enjoy.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Okay.

Next we have Phyllis Elston, and Phyllis is -- former Public Outreach with Government Affairs. I'm sorry. It was Government Affairs Director, Southern New Jersey Light Rail.

**PHYLLIS R. ELSTON:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I seemed to have caused a little bit of confusion by submitting my testimony on letterhead that's connected with my present professional affiliation, but I'll make it clear that I came here today to testify wearing my past hat, as I was Public Information and Government Affairs Director for this project, as well as the Hudson-Bergen project in North Jersey.

I've taken a half page of notes here today. I can't believe the information that's coming and going, much of which has been hashed over before and much of which, perhaps, needs to be looked at again. In my prepared remarks, I have some points I want to cover, and now I've scribbled all over my copy of my testimony, because I'd like to also try to supply some information that may be of value to you on some of the points that have been raised by others here today. I'll try to do it all in my allotted 10 minutes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

MS. ELSTON: I say, in my testimony, that it's hardly necessary to address the advantages of the Southern New Jersey Light Rail project and other light rail projects in general, although I can do that at length any time that you wish. But, suffice it to say, it's already been done. The song has been played over and over. One thing I must mention though, however, is the brand-new rail infrastructure you have along 34 miles of trackage that was in terribly degraded condition. Back in the days when I was spending three-quarters of my life down here, I used to sit along the line and watch the freight trains coming loaded with chemicals. I do a lot of public advisory work with the chemical industry, and I know the dangers of some of these cargoes. Those locomotives would be swaying back and forth. Those freight cars would be wobbling so badly and you could sit and watch the ballasts falling away from the sides of these tracks.

Ladies and gentlemen, it was a horrific accident waiting to happen, especially when those freight trains went over those decrepit bridges that existed at the time in just two locations along this 34 miles. You now have new rail, new cross bars, new ballasts, new rail bed. And wouldn't have it, except for this project. Two major bridges, road improvements in the city of Camden -- and I know, I've been a mayor myself. I can sympathize with what Herman Costello just said, and I hope he does chase New Jersey Transit, because they do require chasing sometimes, and there should be-- In fact, I think it behooves you Committee members to ask the folks working on the project for a detailed outline of what is being spent on the improvements right here in Burlington City. Because I know what they were supposed to be, and if they're

not turning out what they were supposed to be, somebody's feet have to be held to the fire.

Economic development -- another topic that came up today. Again, it's historic for these kinds of projects to bring huge benefits in economic-development corners of the world where they exist. Block *N* in the heart of Camden City sat there for years. And when we first went down to Camden, we were told nothing is ever going to come on Block *N*. We've been arguing about it down here forever. There will be no development on Block *N*. Today, because of the Southern New Jersey Light Rail Line, a branch of a major financial institution sits in the middle of Block *N*. Next to it is a major branch of a national pharmacy, right in the middle of Block *N* where nothing was ever going to be built. Why? Because when the developer saw the light rail was going to come, the same thing happened that happened up in Joe Doria's corner of the world on the Hudson-Bergen Line. The developer sat back, and when they saw the project coming, they all ran out and got a piece of the action.

That's what happens with these kinds of systems. Economic development takes off. Improvements on Cooper Street. I don't know when's the last time you went to Camden, but wow, you ought to see it. That doesn't even take a look at what you can't see underneath the streets of Camden where our people, back in the days when we started working on that mile and a half, the most expensive part in the streets of Camden -- the most expensive part of the entire project -- no one knew what was under the streets of Camden.

I was down there one day when the guys, who were digging without blueprints because they didn't exist, had to evacuate the area because

they found stuff under there that they weren't sure of what it was. We know what's under the streets of Camden now. We know what the electrical circuitry is. We know what the sewers are. We know what the storm drains are. That alone, I think, has a little bit of merit. It wouldn't have happened without the South Jersey project.

Yet, again, some of us detect what seems like an effort to denigrate the property, the project here today. I hope it isn't what it seems to be. I'm not going to say anymore than that, because I've heard a lot of worthwhile things said by legislators here today, by the Commissioner, people on both sides of the aisle.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: There's good things, sure.

MS. ELSTON: I am very happy to hear the project is here. Let's do what we can to make it work.

Regarding costs, and this is very important. Back to what Assemblyman Conaway said -- that he sat down with Frank Russo, and talked about Frank Russo being the former director of the Office of New Rail Construction at New Jersey Transit. Assemblyman Conaway said that he was told that the cost of the project would be -- I think he said \$450 million. My research and my notes, that go way back, had 452 million. Frank Russo could have-- He's a very brilliant man. I'm sure he was addressing the problem from the standpoint of design and engineering. That's his specialty. I can't imagine he would have been addressing anything else. He said \$450 million. We contracted for \$452 million for design and engineering. And if you make New Jersey Transit produce the records, you will find that is not overspent. It's not overspent.

I can't address the matters of what happened to financing the line. I can't address operation and maintenance. I'm not the expert on that, but I'm wondering why I don't see the people who are the experts on that here today. There's people that should be here who aren't here, and I really wonder why. I wish somebody -- Mr. Chairman, through you and anybody up there -- I'd love to hear, after the fact, why key people that worked on the project when the project was being born and before it was born, where are they?

It's further urgent that you note-- Here's a very interesting thing. When we contracted for the Hudson-Bergen Line with DBOM, because one of your points on your agenda is you're interested in DBOM, this was the first. The Hudson-Bergen is the only light rail project in the entire nation ever to come in on time and under budget with no claims. That's the efficacy of the DBOM type of a contract. At the same time that we contracted Hudson-Bergen, part of the same contract was \$100 million for improvements on the Newark City subway. The Newark City subway, by the way, is the only line that makes money for New Jersey Transit. That little light rail line that goes back to when I was born in the '40s made money then, makes money now.

But, as someone else said here today, transportation projects generally don't produce revenue. Southern New Jersey is not going to be unique in that. But let me get back to that contract. We had Hudson-Bergen under DBOM. We had the same contracts, the same people, same everything, same players. Here comes the Newark City subway in the traditional mode of contract being managed by New Jersey Transit. Guess what? Thirty-million dollars over budget, very, very late being delivered, and to this day not running

directly. What's wrong with this picture? I have no clue, but I hope you keep up your sessions and keep working to find out what's wrong with that picture.

Now let me try and address a few things that came up today. Debt service -- the debt, I guess, you know again, you need to look into the financing. I can address those many questions that came up about how come we didn't pursue any Federal funding. I think I know part of the reason why we didn't. At the time that we were doing South Jersey, we were also doing Hudson-Bergen, extraordinary effort on the part of the State of New Jersey. Let me mention that had it been left to New Jersey Transit's traditional mode of operating, it never would have happened.

We had to establish the Office of New Rail Construction within New Jersey Transit to get these projects done, because, believe it or not, I don't know how many of you realize that since its inception in 1979, New Jersey Transit has never built anything, unless we count parking decks and parking lots -- never built a project. Did we spend money on a lot of contracts under Democrat and Republican administrations? Yes, we did. We sent plenty of work out there to the consultants. Did they end up and work in the streets for our people and things for our people to ride? No, they didn't. They ended up in studies on the shelf. They still sit there. So, when we are looking at priorities about how did we fund this, we were getting so much money from the Feds for the Hudson-Bergen project at the time that it was feared there wouldn't be a chance in Hades that we would get more Federal money for this project.

The pressure was on, as you heard from the legislators, "Do something in South Jersey." So our choice was, how can we do it? Do we do

it? Do we don't do it? Do we tell Senator Haines and Jack Collins to go away, get lost? No, we decided to do it in an out-of-the-box way, of thinking innovatively with State funding. Now we have to look back at that and say, was that a mistake, because we're going to have debt? We have debt on the Garden State Parkway we could get rid of like that (indicating), to the tune of millions and millions a year. We don't do it. So we're going to get rid of debt., let's get rid of debt.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: How do you get rid of it like that?

MS. ELSTON: I will tell you, when you give us the meeting we've been asking you for.

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: Excuse me, one second.

Mr. Chairman, who does this speaker represent, just for my own sake?

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: I think you indicated you're--

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: New Jersey Transit or South Jersey Light Rail?

MS. ELSTON: No. I am speaking today because I hope my remarks, as the person who used to be in charge of Public Affairs and Government Affairs for this project -- I'm hoping my remarks will be--

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: For? Public Affairs for what company?

MS. ELSTON: No. No. In the Office of New Rail Construction at New Jersey Transit.

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: For New Jersey Transit?

MS. ELSTON: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: And you're currently employed now -- You're not affiliated with the project at all?

MS. ELSTON: No. No. No. Just that I care very much about, you know--

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: You just care. Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: You said earlier, in spite of your letterhead and so forth, you're here, basically, on your own.

MS. ELSTON: That's a mistake. Forgive me?

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Sure.

MS. ELSTON: I should have just used plain white paper. It's so routine. My computer is loaded with my letterhead.

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: Just so I know where the points of views are coming from.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MS. ELSTON: You know, the Transportation Trust Fund -- all of us who worry about public transportation and how to fund it worry about the Transportation Trust Fund. But, you know, I've been 30 years in government, and I've seen both sides of the aisle raiding the Transportation Trust Fund to pay for other things. It happens. If we could look at the Transportation Trust Fund, if we're lucky enough to get it re-enlivened as something that's dedicated, and if the current administration really knuckles down and uses this for transportation projects and not to fill budget gaps, alleluia. We should have been there decades ago. That money should be sacred, and I hope it will be.



Part of the problem we're feeling now, when Commissioner Fox talks about we have so many requests and no money to fund it, because the Transportation Trust Fund is empty -- it's empty because in the past we didn't listen to Larry Weiss decades ago when he said, "Dedicate that money and use it only for transportation." So you who are in office now have the opportunity to do this. We should dedicate that money.

I could go on and on. I'd make myself available to you for whatever my past knowledge may be of use. I can bring you the people who were the players at the time. God knows where some of them are right now, but I know that many of them care very much, as I still do, and would do whatever they can to help you do what you say you want to do, i.e., make this project work.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

Any questions?

Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Mr. Chairman, thank you.

I just thank Ms. Elston for her testimony today. I just want to clear up a couple of things. There are other Transit projects that are new. The Montclair Connection is new, the expansion of the Newark Subway Line is new, so this is not the only new construction, nor is this the only new construction with Hudson-Bergen Light Rail. So there are other new projects out there. I think that the testimony about Block *N* in Camden, about the new businesses, that's great. That's something that everybody in this state should be happy about, because if we have economic activity there, that helps everybody.

I think the notion that the infrastructure in that city was improved because of the construction of light rail, having people go underground and finding out what's there and cleaning up the problems, that's great. My dilemma is, I'm not sure that that's where we should be taking our transportation dollars -- for economic revitalization. There are other resources for that. The question that we face is, if we have to do economic revitalization, great. Let's not use our transportation dollars to do it. If we have to do infrastructure repair, let's not take our transportation dollars.

You mentioned the freight rail, the line being decrepit and the trains rocking back and forth, and it's certainly a wonderful thing. But if you had a high number, figured a million dollars a mile for running track for freight, that all-- We could have put in a brand-new freight line for \$34 million, not a billion dollars.

The question here, Ms. Elston, is not whether we should undo this. It's here, and everybody has said we want to make it work. The question is, how do we wind up spending a billion dollars to accomplish things -- using transportation dollars to accomplish things that aren't transportation related? That's the problem that many members of this Panel have. If we had unlimited resources, if we had listened to Larry Weiss many, many years ago -- and Larry is from my district, and I know him well, he's a great man -- maybe this would not be an issue, because we would have dollars falling out of the sky, but we don't. So it's a question of how do we allocate our resources.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MS. ELSTON: Mr. Chairman, through you, if I may, I really hope you continue these hearings, because some entities, as I scouted around trying

to get my information -- there are people who would like to be here testifying today but who are a bit nervous to come, because they will be in the courtroom when you go to court. I really think they just didn't want to spend their capital--

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Yes, and--

MS. ELSTON: --you know, but you really do have to keep looking. There are answers for Assemblyman Wisniewski with regard to the financing. Again, I say these -- that we wouldn't have things built had it not been for the Office of New Rail Construction, which was an initiative which is outstanding. It's a shame that within the structure, administratively at New Jersey Transit now, that office has been neutered and no longer has what it had in the days it did these projects. It no longer has that authority.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Assemblyman Sarlo.

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think what we should do is, for the mayor's sake, who spoke so passionately before, is get a list of all the off-track improvements that he was guaranteed or promised, through some type of developer's agreement, to make sure that is getting done. But since we're trying to learn to make things better, future products better, and as somebody who worked in the Public Information Office, Ms. Elston, do you think-- And it seems like there's been some confusion with some of the municipalities understanding what they were going to get or what they were promised. What do you think we could do better, in the future, for New Jersey Transit to educate the municipalities so they have a better understanding, looking forward. I mean, somebody who has worked in that field for transit--

MS. ELSTON: Probably, Assemblyman Sarlo, you may not like my answer, because I'm very much a fiscal conservative and rather hard-nosed. I was prepared to know, from my municipal experience as an elected official, that every mayor wants to get what he or she wants to get for their town. But when you budget a project as we did with this one, and then the games start coming-- You know, when the political movers start moving and shaking, and I really wanted the station over here because my friend owns this property, etc., etc.-- What you have to do in the future is be hard-nosed. We held many meetings in these communities over and over again. Believe me, my heart and soul was listening to Herbert Costello. I used to bring his comments back, and lots of times I'd be put down by the people that were working on the project because *X* was simply not affordable. So, in the future, we have to work to make clear to the elected officials and the peoples in the community, "Look, there's *X* number of dollars. Here is a plan of improvements for your community." I'm hoping some of the county planning people will pick up on this. And then, when the games start ensuing and the people start tugging, be hard-nosed and be conservative and say, "Look, there just aren't enough dollars for that." The mayors don't want to hear it. The people don't want to hear it, but we have to be realistic, and some more of that in the future would be good.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you, Ms. Elston.

MS. ELSTON: You're welcome.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: What I'd like to do, going forward, some of you have been here since, probably, before 10:00 this morning. We have 10 more -- I count at least 10 more people to testify. So could I respectfully suggest we keep it to five minutes, if you can condense

what you're saying; and I'll try to politely, if I have to, remind you that you've gone more than five minutes. I think a lot of folks have been here a long time.

With that said -- and Dan, I'm not picking on you -- we have Dan O'Connell from the United Transportation Union. It's just coincidence that you were next.

**DANIEL O'CONNELL:** I'll remember this in November.  
(laughter)

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Chairman Wisniewski, and members of the Assembly Light Rail Panel and members of the Assembly Transportation Committee. My name is Dan O'Connell. I'm the State Legislative Director for the United Transportation Union. I'm also a former Locomotive Engineer for New Jersey Transit and Conrail. I and my wife are current residents of Delran in Burlington County. I'll keep my remarks -- I don't have prepared remarks, Mr. Chairman.

A lot of the things that have been said I don't want to repeat. But we hope this project succeeds also. If it does, there's a possibility for growth, and that would lead to economic development. It would improve the quality of the people living in this area. I worked on this line as a locomotive fireman and a locomotive engine man. So did my dad.

Ms. Elston is absolutely correct. I was in Riverside yesterday, and the approach up to the Delanco Bridge -- they've done a tremendous job. But we share Commissioner Fox's concerns about where money goes. I would refer both Committees to an article the Commissioner had in last Friday's *Philadelphia Inquirer* about funding future transportation projects. It was well-written, and it made a number of very, very good points.

The two regrets we have -- the Federal funds have been gone over, I won't go over that again. But the other one is -- and I remember raising this with Former Commissioner Haley at a public hearing, I think, in Pennsauken -- is that we go right under the Atlantic City line -- a project that needs more riders also -- and yet, we have no interface. At the time, he said there was a plan. As you can see, as the project has gone forward, there is none.

If I were the king of the world, we would have run heavy rail. I'm not that old, but old enough to remember that there used to be a passenger train, and I'm sure the mayor of Burlington remembers. It came from New York City to Atlantic City every day. We could have given people a one-seat ride, stopping along the northeast corridor and all these river towns. In addition, we could put people on the Atlantic City line going into Philadelphia. There they can make connections to get to the International Airport. This is the future of transportation projects as interconnectivity.

I remember asking Former Commissioner Weinstein why a light rail project, as opposed to a heavy rail project. He said, "We wanted to serve the entertainment and cultural venues in Camden." And I know, now Mayor Palmer in Trenton is looking for something to get light rail through the streets of Trenton over to the State House area for State employees. That's a great idea. I guess what we could have looked at doing is light railing those two ends into the two towns of Trenton and Camden. You could have rehabed this line, run heavy rail on it -- you wouldn't have had the problems with time separation, with the freights-- There was just a lot of other things that could have gone into the mix.

I don't mean to second-guess anyone. Like I said, we support this project. I'd like to see trains running back here. One last point I'd like to raise -- the safety concerns of the people along the line. I've been a locomotive engineer. I have friends that have been involved in accidents at road crossings and seen the loss of life. It can be very, very traumatic.

There are education programs. Mr. Chairman, you talked about seeing one where they go into the schools. The Federal government sponsors Operation Lifesaver. It will do the same thing. We need to educate people along the line. The vehicles are not that long. Certainly, the freight trains that operate through here now and have operated continuously present much, much more of a hazard, I would think, than the light rail vehicle. But I think these things can be addressed.

I hope this project is a success, as I said in the beginning, and I appreciate you giving the time to make the remarks.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

Any questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Just a small one.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Assemblywoman, sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: No question. Just that they both raised some thoughts in my mind. You mentioned Atlantic City. I think we should have the project people come in with their PowerPoint programs and show us what's being done, what has been done already. I believe that there is a spur to Atlantic City that can come in the future, as part of this line. I recall that being built into the project for future reference, going into Atlantic City.

There are a number of things that the New Jersey Transit can tell us about the project, and, certainly, we should question the contractor as to what was done and hold their feet to the fire. And if necessary, and if an investigation is necessary as to those courses, we have the SCI to look into it. That's something we should think about.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

If I pronounce this right -- James Ciacciarelli -- and you can feel free to correct me on that -- the New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers. Was I close?

**JAMES CIACCIARELLI:** Yes, you were, actually.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

MR. CIACCIARELLI: It's actually Ciacciarelli.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Ciacciarelli, okay.

MR. CIACCIARELLI: It doesn't look like the way it's spelled out. I'll keep my comments very brief today.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CIACCIARELLI: I want to thank you and the Panel for allowing me to take this time to speak. I just want to reaffirm our position. We were always in favor of this project. We've always felt that this was a long-term solution, not an overnight quickie, basically, between Trenton and Camden, to support and bring up those two major cities.

It's very true that the Gloucester alignment, actually, would have helped the whole thing, but the squeaky wheel got the grease and Gloucester didn't really want it, so here we are today. We believe it's also, sort of, a spine line that we can build off of. We could go back to Gloucester some time in the



future. We should go up to the State House in Trenton, and we should also consider extending up to Mercer County Airport. I believe the President flew into Mercer County Airport yesterday, so it's something to think about in this post-9/11 period.

If you look -- we did a little demographic study. What we found was -- all this talk about demographics -- flat, no growth, what have you -- the township is on the line. Bordentown, Mansfield, Florence, Burlington, Delran, Pennsauken increased in population because of their expanse. The river towns actually decreased in population. That means, to us, there's a continued getting away from the traditional older suburbs. This line would, more or less, again, in the future, would bring back people to those towns and bring them up. One only has to look towards New Brunswick to see what a viable community can be. Camden can be that too, with the university there. New Brunswick has a university. New Brunswick had a major revitalization of the downtown area.

So, just in closing, we feel that the line is needed, the line is solid, and we're not going to speak towards the cost overruns, what have you, but there is no project that is without a lot of expense. One only has to look towards, about 20 years ago, maybe not that long, 15 years ago, the New Jersey Turnpike was trying to double itself all the way up and only got as far as Exit 8A. Now you have a bottleneck at Exit 8A. I know, because I used to travel that for 4 years. You'd fly down to 8A and then you would just stop completely. So it's just something to think about.

Once again, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

Any questions? (no response)

Thank you, Mr. Ciacciarelli.

MR. CIACCIARELLI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: James Thorton from the Delaware Valley Association of Rail Passengers. Thank you for being so patient.

**JAMES R. THORTON:** Thank you, State Assembly members.

New Jersey Transit should not have planned this as a light rail line. It is too costly. This proposed schedule with the 10:00 p.m. shutdown every night is inadequate. Because Federal regulations prohibit light rail cars from operating simultaneously with freight, the freight side of rail operations is severely affected and could harm local industry.

Camden and Trenton passenger rails should have been developed as a commuter operation compatible with the existing freight service. Current examples of commuter lines in this region are the Philadelphia, the Atlantic City route, and SEPTA's Regional Rail Division in Philadelphia and the four surrounding counties in Pennsylvania. Another example is, it's not meant for day-to-day commuters. This example is the passenger operation on the Cape May seashore lines operating in Cape May County.

New Jersey Transit should have been adapting an existing railroad design, and not diesel light rail, in developing this rail corridor. New Jersey Transit should also have taken the least costly path, such as negotiating leases of the right-of-way or operating capacity from the freight carriers that own the line, instead of outright purchase of the line. Existing car and locomotive designs currently used by New Jersey Transit could also be used on this line.

Also, the rail commuter option would also allow through-routing to Atlantic City, via Delair Junction and Pennsauken where the Camden to Trenton passes under the tracks used between Philadelphia and Atlantic City.

But the biggest drawback with selection of railroad design on this route would be -- you'd have to forego street running in Camden and the State House extension in Trenton, which would follow State Street from the Trenton Train Station.

Railroad cars and locomotives currently used by New Jersey Transit would be too large and heavy for such street running. Now DVARP has long withheld support from New Jersey Transit light rail plans between Camden and Trenton because of the high cost or incompatibility with freight. DVARP had conditioned support for the light rail line on the State House -- on the planned extension to the State House, which is now in doubt, and of possibly further extensions in Trenton and Mercer County.

DVARP had also, earlier, supported light rail development of other travel corridors, which were much more in need of development of rail service, such as Mt. Holly and Glassboro, preferring those over Camden to Trenton rail.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Any questions for the witness?

(no response)

Okay. Thank you very much for your testimony.

MR. THORTON: Thanks.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Next we have Victor Vittorino, Deputy Mayor, Township of Delanco.

**DEPUTY MAYOR VICTOR VITTORINO:** Good afternoon. I want to welcome everybody to Burlington County, and also, at some point in time, invite you down to our little suburban town of Delanco Township.

I've heard a lot of testimony today, and I really think that Assemblyman Connors and the Assistant Chairmen should be complimented on this forum, because I really think that a forum like this should be held on every major project. Because, I don't care what administration is in power, nothing ever goes right. There's always things that can be learned from projects. So, if lessons can be learned from the process of how this was done so that the next project is done in a more cost-efficient or better manner, that's good. Maybe it wouldn't need to be held at a public forum like this, but that's good. But on the plus side, I disagree with some statements that were made regarding: a rail line should not be built, or a light rail system should not be built, just for the sole effect of economic development.

Delanco Township is a pass-through community along the corridor. We do not have a downtown business district. We look differently from the Burlington City or the Riverside or the Riverton. But we have already started to realize the benefits of the whole light rail system being put in, in conjunction with the freight line. We now have -- just signed a deal for a \$6 million manufacturing facility to come into our PI zone, which we just made a redevelopment zone. It was stated, and we battled Millville for this. So I thank the southern group for getting out and not letting the light rail come to them, because this project would have gone down to them instead of coming into my township in Delanco.

This \$6 million facility is going to create 85 jobs, initially, with up to 450 after five years. Now, granted that doesn't help ridership, initially, but, I can assure you, that will help ridership as the years progress. Residents are going to move into our township. We've already seen an increase in sales in our township and surrounding towns, with an increased value of the sales. So I think there is a correlation of economic development and ridership in the overall scheme of evaluating.

I think it's this body's responsibility to look at the previous administration's decisions on priorities. I disagree, again, with, I believe it was Mr. Weinstein, that said that it was an ill-conceived idea. I don't think it was an ill-conceived idea. You can argue and make decisions based on testimony you hear from these hearings, whether the planning process was done correctly, but overall the fact that this rail line was put into where it is in this corridor is going to help all of Burlington County along the corridor. This was a vibrant -- 12 different towns that were self-sufficient amongst themselves. A mall to us was a Willingboro Plaza, which is now gone. We never heard of the malls. Little by little, the towns had deteriorated. It's all coming back now.

So, while I applaud you in what you're trying to do, I hope you keep in mind this should be a bipartisan effort to rectify the system so that we do it better or in a more cost-effective way.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Vic, just the one -- you had mentioned Commissioner Weinstein. I don't think you meant him -- said it was an ill-conceived idea.

MR. VITTORINO: I thought he said it was ill-conceived and not planned. Or Fox, I'm sorry.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: You meant Fox. Yes.

MR. VITTORINO: Yes. Sorry about that.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: I just wanted to -- for the record.

MR. VITTORINO: Yes. So I do want to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Yes. Any questions?

MR. VITTORINO: Please come to our little hamlet too.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Deputy Mayor, thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: What kind of manufacturing?

MR. VITTORINO: It's a company that builds -- it's coming from Maryland, and they build component parts for modular homes, which Burlington County--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Very good.

MR. VITTORINO: --and as soon as you hear from our Economic Development Coordinator, Mark Remsa, we'll tell you all the good things that are happening--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: There's so few manufacturing businesses coming in. It's a breath of fresh air.

MR. VITTORINO: Well, kudos to us.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes.

MR. VITTORINO: Believe me, our Township Committee did our homework, and we took it away from Gloucester County.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: That's great.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

MR. VITTORINO: Thanks.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Harry Van Sciver, representing the Beverly City Planning Board, Chairman.

Thank you for coming.

**HARRY W. VAN SCIVER:** Thank you. I'm Harry Van Sciver, representing the smallest incorporated city in the State of New Jersey, probably in the nation. Three hundred and twenty acres, 2700 hundred people, if we're all home at once. (laughter) I thank you all for coming down to look into this issue.

It certainly can't hurt to examine the process by which we arrived at light rail in Burlington County, but I can assure you that it's a very, very important thing to us. You can improve the process, great. I hope you are looking into expanding the line into downtown Trenton to the State House. I would let you know that little Beverly, several years ago, knowing that this was coming, revised its master plan to acknowledge its existence, changed its zoning ordinances to prepare for it, and last week-- We've had a problem in the community, for over 20 years, of a huge abandoned home for the aged on our principal street, having no use -- last used as a manufacturing plant. The total wreck -- last week our Planning Board approved a senior citizen project converting the existing structure into 25 apartments for senior citizens.

The Borough Link Transportation system, which is already running through our county, will provide transportation for the seniors directly to the rail station in Beverly, as well as to other parts of the county. So we're getting a very modern transportation system which we've long needed. I appreciate the efforts of the Legislature and the people of New Jersey to think about little Beverly and the area down here. We sometimes feel cut off from

the world. I commend you for looking for more effective ways to improve light rail in this region and other areas of the state.

I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Any questions for Mr. Van Sciver?

Go ahead, please.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I just want to thank him for coming before us and taking the time and waiting this long. But this is good news, to hear that part of what we wanted to happen is beginning to happen.

MR. VAN SCIVER: It is happening.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you very much.

MR. VAN SCIVER: Tremendous.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you, Harry.

Catherine English -- is Catherine English here? (no response)

Christine McMullen, Cross County Connection.

**CHRISTINE McMULLEN:** Good afternoon.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Christine, thank you for being so patient.

MS. McMULLEN: Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I very much appreciate your taking the time. My name, again, is Christine McMullen. I'm Director of Marketing for Cross County Connection Transportation Management Association. We are located in Marlton, in Burlington County, in New Jersey. We are one of the nine TMAs in the state. Now, our non-profit organization strives to bring alternatives for the single occupant vehicle to the southern New Jersey area, and that's in order to reduce



congestion on our over-utilized roadways and reduce the amount of vehicle exhaust polluting our air.

The official mission of Cross County Connection is to advocate and promote the establishment of a more balanced and efficient transportation system, providing for a cleaner, healthier environment, and enhanced quality of life and an improved business climate. Our organization currently represents approximately 45 employers with a combined work force of around 18,000 employees. We also serve as a source of commute information for the general public in over 170 locations in South Jersey, in seven counties.

Cross County Connection supports the improved transit service, like the southern New Jersey Light Rail system, to enable better transportation between employment and residential sites. As our population and employment in southern New Jersey continue to grow, more traffic congestion will result. We believe that the lack of transit and the limited opportunity to take an alternative commute option stifles our regional ability to reduce dependence on the single-occupant vehicle.

Now this Camden to Trenton Light Rail system is an excellent first-step towards improving transit options in southern New Jersey. And with the expansion of transit, we provide the commuting public with another choice, resulting in the reduction of traffic congestion and resulting gridlock. I can assure you that Cross County Connection will be working closely with New Jersey Transit and the counties of Burlington and Camden to alert the general public about the availability of the service, how it links riders to other locations and other transit opportunities in the region, and to help build ridership along this line. We already work closely with Camden County on their community

shuttles program and the BurLink system in the county. It assists us in getting the Work First New Jersey clients from their residences to their work place.

We have seen-- I am a resident-- I'll deviate from my prepared remarks. As a resident of Florence Township, I have already seen the resulting interest in our township, as a growth opportunity, as a place for people to live, and for developers to come in and seek opportunities. So we believe strongly in this process, as an organization, and I appreciate the opportunity to talk to you today.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

Any questions? (no response)

Thank you, Ms. McMullen.

Mark Remsa, from Burlington County.

Mark, thanks for being so patient.

**MARK REMSA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, both Chairs, and Panel members. I am Mark Remsa. I am the Director of Economic Development and Regional Planning for Burlington County.

Before it was fashionable to say the words *smart growth*, Burlington County was pursuing and implementing smart growth initiatives. Burlington County understands the regional planning approach. We also understand how we fit into the region, the greater region, which extends beyond just Burlington County.

We're also aware of what's going on at the two terminal cities in our region -- Camden City and Trenton City. We understand and know about the investments that are being made. It's very exciting. In order to achieve

smart growth, we must plan now for the future. We also must learn from our mistakes.

On an aside, I spoke to Assemblywoman Heck. I'm originally from Bergen County and know some of the mistakes that can be made, and congestion, and so forth. Sometimes it's appropriate to do the planning now for the future so that you don't end up with some of those congestion problems. So that's exactly what Burlington County has been doing over the past several years.

Back in '95, the freeholders initiated the Route 130-Delaware River corridor revitalization effort. We worked with 12 municipalities all along the riverfront to plan for the revitalization, in other words, improving the quality of life here.

What we've been doing is, we've been setting forth key initiatives to achieve smart growth. In '98, we completed the plan, and then in '99, the State Planning Commission endorsed that plan. It was the first corridor plan endorsed by the State Planning Commission. And even before the ink was wet on those pages, we've been working with the communities to encourage economic development, revitalization, and improving quality of life.

Our focus is on redevelopment, not sprawl. We want to reinvest in Planning Areas 1 and 2, not causing heavy growth into Planning Areas 4 and 5, which Burlington County also has. Those are our farm belts and very sensitive environmental areas. We want to put in place the building blocks that will pave the way for a better future. You may have heard a couple folks talk about the BurLink. BurLink is a county-operated public transit system.

It's operated by Burlington County. It runs from Pemberton Township to Beverly City. It's, sort of, that east-west connection that's been missing.

And by the way, all the projections that were made for the ridership, it's all been exceeded at this point in time. We see it growing further, especially when the light rail comes and offers more opportunity for more options to travel throughout Burlington County and in the region.

We also are in the process of creating major employment centers. The Haines Industrial Center, which is right on this line, has a light rail stop. The developer of that wanted that stop there. It's another option that his potential tenants are going to use to get their employees there. Any major employer asks, "Where are my employees, and how am I going to get them there?" here's another option. And also, the labor pool that lives from Trenton to Camden, through Burlington County -- some of them will be working in that major center, which is planned to have 5000 to 7000 employees.

You also may have heard about the Merck-Medco, where we worked with Willingboro to redevelop the old Willingboro Plaza; Burlington Coat Factory redeveloping an old shopping center with 700,000 square feet of space. All of these are going to create thousands of jobs. The BurLink is going to tap into them and also tap into the light rail line. Yes, it is quite amazing, the statistics.

The importance here is that we are planning for the future, for the growth, for smart growth. This light rail line is a piece of that smart growth effort. Burlington County and the 12 communities realize they can't do it alone. They need the State's help and assistance, that continued assistance, and I was quite encouraged to hear today that the State is preparing to give

that extra effort to make this line even more successful than we believe that it was going to be.

So, with that, I thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you. I wanted to keep it brief, and I know there are several other folks who want to talk to you today. So, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Any other questions? (no response)

Mark, thank you. Thanks for all the good work that you do in Burlington County.

MR. REMSA: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: And we thank you for your initial support here. Tell the county officials, years ago, their help was -- made this project happen.

MR. REMSA: We will.

Thank you again.

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: Rose, it would be nice if we only had 12 communities to get on board.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I'm sorry?

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: I said it would be nice if we only had 12 communities in Bergen County to get on board.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: You bet. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: We have 70 to try to get on board.  
That's--

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: I have F. A. Winkler.  
Mr. Winkler, I assume you're representing yourself?

**F. A. WINKLER:** Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: I didn't see your affiliation.

MR. WINKLER: Mr. Chairman, I'm representing myself, but I happen to have been in the transportation business over 58 years. I remember when this was active out here with passenger service. I remember when there was an electric line to Atlantic City, out of Camden. It ran from 1906 to 1931 -- first major railroad electrification in the United States, by a new field in Millville.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I think he qualifies as an expert.  
(laughter)

MR. WINKLER: Not exactly. I'm still active. I'm still involved in the transportation business. I work for a shore-line railroad in southern New Jersey. I know about losing the business to Mr. Van Sciver there. We were working on that, too, down in Millville.

But what I want to, really, talk to you about is an issue that hasn't been covered yet, and that's national defense. I was around during the Second World War. I remember what happened. Gasoline was rationed. Four gallons a week, that was under the A sticker. You could have rationing again. Right now, if you read the *Wall Street Journal* yesterday, you'll see the conditions going on with the OPEC nations. We didn't have OPEC then, but you got OPEC now. The Mexican oil workers are going on strike for increased wages, so the whole thing is portending toward an increase in fuel prices. I predict that you're going to either have rationing or you're going to have \$5 and \$6 a gallon gasoline.

What is that going to do to the automobile? This is something that you've got to think about, because if you want an idea of what the conditions were like under total mobilization, I suggest you get ahold of the papers of Joseph B. Eastman, who was Director of the Office of Defense Transportation under President Roosevelt. Those papers are available in the Library of Congress, very worthwhile reading -- how it was when everything was dependent upon public transportation and not the automobile. So I think this is something that you should take into consideration. Not only in this situation here, which serves these river towns, which there was a lot of industry here and could be again, but also for future planning on other light rail projects or other transit projects.

I think you will see a substantial increase in ridership, particularly if we get into a national emergency of some sort. I do believe, if you're concerned about Federal dollars, that there will be Federal dollars forthcoming to you available for future projects, particularly if it involves anything in connection with an emergency effort.

That's my comments. If you have any questions, I'll be pleased to entertain them.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you for your comments.

Any questions? (no response)

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you, Mr. Winkler.

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Andrew Carten, City of Trenton.

Mr. Carten, because you're the last speaker, I'm--

**A N D R E W C A R T E N:** All the time.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you for being so-- Have you been here since this morning.

MR. CARTEN: Yes, I have.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you for your patience, sir.

MR. CARTEN: But I also recognize that you've been here all this morning as well, and I will make it brief. My name is Andrew Carten. I'm the Planning Director for the City of Trenton. I'm here on behalf of Mayor Palmer, who had asked me to, sort of, reaffirm his strong support for this project. I'd also like to make note of the fact that, in the last couple of years, the City of Trenton, as well as Mercer County, has developed a very strong development relationship. It should be noteworthy, since the county executive, Bob Prunetti, is Republican and the mayor is Democrat. I think we have, sort of, gotten together on this project, recognizing the benefit that it presents to a city.

I know there's been much discussion about the economic benefits that a number of communities, as well as the City of Trenton, hope to realize from this project. We are seeing that already. You've had some speakers here that have spoken about servicing the needs of the population, whether or not it's the disabled population or the low-income residents of the City of Trenton, who do not have the benefit of a vehicle to get in and about the city. You also note that, when you're looking at a study of transportation in economic development in the State of New Jersey, that a lot of the jobs are outside the City of Trenton or the City of Camden. The ability to go to those sites, as Mr.



Remsa was pointing to, light rail will be the mechanism by which they can get there -- that it's affordable and that it's efficient.

These are many of the reasons, for the use of the system to meet the needs of the population, that we see and we're looking forward to being able to realize. From the economic development perspective, I think there are a number of benefits that can come here. From a planning perspective, what we are doing is looking at locations immediately around our rail stops.

For example, we have a large industrial site at the Corner of Cass Street and Route 129. It's laid fallow for many years. As soon as this site was identified, as soon as the decision to locate a light rail stop was made, both the county and the city said, "Let's plan this. Let's develop this in such a way that it can attract a development that's beneficial for us."

We, just this week, have received responses to our request for proposals to come up with the development of a transit village, a mixed-use development. Now, the benefit that that presents, both to the city and to the county, is that the county, in the last six years, has made two major investments -- the Trenton Thunder Baseball Stadium and the Sovereign Bank Arena. This location is right in the middle of that, so it enables us to, sort of, capitalize on those two major investments, so that it is a much more efficient use of our dollars, both the county as well as the city, and enables us to, sort of, leverage on, in this case, New Jersey Transit's investment.

Although I applaud and I understand a desire to examine some of the decisions that were made -- I agree, I think there's a lot to be learned as to what factors come into play to make these decisions -- I think it's important to go on record, at least from the City of Trenton and Mercer County, that this

is a project that we feel is well worth the investment and that we feel, in the long run, it will pay immediate dividends to the people that rely upon this service. I believe both the City of Trenton and the riverfront communities will reap many economic benefits.

So thank you very much for the opportunity to present that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I just wanted to ask you--

MR. CARTEN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: You appear to have on Lalor and 129 a very large senior citizen--

MR. CARTEN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --development. Do you have a large population?

MR. CARTEN: That's the South West Village development. We actually were hoping to add another stop there to service senior citizens. However, because of its close proximity to Cass Street, the New Jersey Transit officials indicated they wanted to keep within a certain travel commute between Camden and Trenton.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Then you should look for a shuttle.

MR. CARTEN: Excuse me?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: You should look for a shuttle service.

MR. CARTEN: Yes.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: That is our last speaker.

Number one, I'd like to thank all my fellow legislators from near and far. Some of you, I think it took over two hours to get here. In particular, I want to thank Chairman Doria and Chairman Wisniewski for going along, I guess, with the Speaker and letting me chair this meeting today. I have learned a lot. We just can't sit here. There is a lot of information to digest. For that reason, we will eventually have a printed transcript made available for all -- initially, at least, for the Transportation Committee and for the Panel, and I think for anyone who is interested in a copy of the transcript.

But I walk away here today, I think I have learned a lot. I hope all of you have learned a lot. I know the scuttlebutt and everybody talking, it was somehow -- it was my intention to beat up on the project. From the beginning, I've tried to remain consistent. It's just about finished. We're going to make the very best of it, and I use the words *very best of it*, as we go forward. There's a lot of people counting on it. Just as I sat here and listened to the testimony, particularly Camden, and especially Trenton, and I'm sure Mayor Palmer would love to see some day, if we ever have the money, see the extension all the way into the Capitol, because that would just make so many more riders.

Someone even said to me, "Assemblyman, if they extend that into the Capitol, you'll ride it." I live in Pennsauken. In fact, I live two blocks from the Gamblers' Express. I hear the whistles on the Gamblers' Express. And Mr. O'Connell talked about the fact that there isn't a link, but right at Derosse Avenue in Pennsauken the light rail goes under that Atlantic City line. As you think about it, gee, ideally, it would be so perfect to link that up.

So I think we walk away today with a lot of food for thought, a lot to think about. I think we have to digest everything that happens here. Will

there be future meetings or a meeting? That remains to be seen. I think, between all of us, we can talk about that and see if we have to do that.

One last thing, again in terms of the future and what it means to New Jersey and extensions of the light rail -- will we do it, won't we do it, how do we go about it, the planning-- Mark Remsa -- I know, if Mark is still here, he always emphasizes planning. If you have good planning, the end result will be a good project. So I hope that's what we all walk away from here with.

To all of you that have been here since 10:00, thank you so much.

If there is anyone else who would like to make a comment--

Chairman Doria.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: What I'd like to do is just second Chairman Conners's comments. I want to, again, thank Mayor Costello and the hospitality of the people of Burlington. Let me just say, I think light rail is a very important transportation concept, mass transit initiative here in the State of New Jersey. I believe that the need for light rail exists. I believe the South Jersey line had problems. I do think we can learn, without necessarily trashing-- I don't think that this Committee meeting was ever intended as an opportunity to trash the South Jersey Light Rail project. I think it was to learn. Unfortunately, the media and some people made it into a negative situation, and I don't think that that was appropriate. I think, rather, we're here to learn from what has been done.

I think that there are problems. The fact that there is a lawsuit presently taking place, between the company building the light rail here in South Jersey and New Jersey Transit, is unfortunate. We didn't have that problem in Hudson-Bergen. We have not had that problem. So, obviously,

there are problems here that are different than what took place, and every project is different. Every project has its unique benefits, and obviously, its unique disadvantages. I think that here, what we have to do is-- Dealing with a limited pot of money that we do have in Transportation and the need to refund the Transportation Trust Fund, which I think everybody on this Panel, both Republican and Democrats would agree, we need to refund the Transportation Trust Fund.

Having been one of those Democrats who broke ranks with the party in 1984 to support the Trust Fund under former Governor Kean, I believe that we need to look to the future, to find as much Federal funding as possible -- especially with the reauthorization of the ISTEA legislation in Washington next year, with the need to reauthorize the Transportation Trust Fund -- working together on a bipartisan basis, working with Chairman Wisniewski, working with the Light Rail Panel to move forward on projects of mass transit that meet the needs of moving people. Because the gentleman spoke about priority during war time and the issues of limitation -- hopefully never happens that we get to gasoline rationing again in the future. But we need to be prepared at all times.

So I think that this meeting was very worthwhile. It presented a lot of issues, a lot of questions. It also gave us some answers. It showed that there is a need to always pay attention to each project individually and the unique needs of the community, as well as the State, in putting together a project of the magnitude of this. Because this is a major project with a great deal of money being spent, impacting on a lot of people, on a lot of

communities, and the quality of life of those communities, we need to continuously stay on top of it.

I, for one, hope that we can do this again, Mr. Chairman Wisniewski, maybe between the Light Rail Panel and the Transportation Panel. Obviously, we'll have Assemblyman Conners as our interlocutor. You could be the interlocutor.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: And I'll drive north. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: A little further north, please.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Will drive north. But it's always nice to visit our South Jersey brethren. I appreciate the opportunity to be here and to have the opportunity to have listened to the testimony.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Chairman Wisniewski.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Chairman Conners, thank you for having Chairman Doria and I convene these Panels so that we can learn more about light rail. I think the most important thing we can come away from this hearing with is everyone here wants to see this project succeed, but we also want to learn, going forward, how to more wisely and efficiently use Transportation dollars.

New Jersey has 8000 plus-or-minus square miles. We have over 8 million people. That gives us about 1000 people per square mile, making us one of the most densely populated political jurisdictions in the world. It's not getting any better. We don't have a lot of room to put new roads, nor probably should we be looking to do that. Mass transportation is one of the solutions that can make life better in this state. But until we find a way to print money, until we find a way to get more dollars into our Transportation

pot without aggravating the voters or perhaps unduly burdening people, we need to be very careful about how we spend these dollars to make sure that every dollar counts.

This project, as one of our witnesses said, accomplished some very good economic redevelopment goals in the City of Camden. It helped rehabilitate a freight line, and those are all worthwhile goals. We also need to keep our goal on the bigger picture, which is, there are a lot of people in the state that are looking for mass transit opportunities. We need to make sure that we prioritize that list and address that list and the needs that are there, greatest to least, and that way we'll be spending our Transportation dollars as wisely as possible.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Okay.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Just a couple of points. I agree with Chairman Wisniewski and, of course, Chairman Doria. On the Transportation Trust Fund, I think it's important, John, that we look towards what you said about locking in how we use the money. Remember, a lot of our commissioners have drained that, or administrations have drained that, for administration costs, instead of real transportation projects. We should stop that.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Because they just take it out, and we don't even know it until after it's happened, and that's not right. That's not what the TTF--

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: I couldn't agree with you more, Rose.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you. See, we agree on some things. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: We agree on whether we disagree. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: That's true. That's true, Joseph. As far as the light rail, it's a wonderful piece of Homeland security. We saw what happened during -- when we had the September 11 problem and the use of the light rail just tripled, because we got people back and forth. We see the need for that. During snowstorms in the northern part of the region, we had that 17 inches of snow. The only thing moving was light rail during that season.

I think it's important for us to listen to the forewarnings of the World War II and the OPEC situation. We've been saying this since we started light rail projects, we cannot continue to depend on the OPEC nations for our own travel and transportation. We are a major transportation corridor, and we have to accept that and make plans in a very positive way.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: I just want to thank you for allowing me to come today and for having this meeting to go over it. I would suggest that the elected officials in the audience, that are still here, talk to Assemblyman Doria and take the opportunity to go up and see what's happened in Bayonne and Jersey City, and what's going into Hoboken. You'd be amazed. The ridership is much more than they anticipated, for one thing.



So these numbers that we get on a preliminary are totally different from what you'll see in actuality.

The second thing is the redevelopment of the area. I was absolutely amazed, I said that earlier, where you go across and you see these old buildings, and then you go into these brand-new buildings, new development, redevelopment. And as Joe would tell you, the old buildings are all coming down. They are all going to be redeveloped. It's been brought about primarily because of light rail. People want to be able to get to work. They want to be able to get to work in a safe, convenient method.

One of the things I see wrong with this project in the beginning -- I'm new to the Committee, you'll have to understand -- but if I were here when this was happening, the first thing I would have said was you have to take in the State House Complex at the one end, anchor this. You also, and I completely disagree with Mr. Warrington, you also have to hook into the Philadelphia connection; because at both ends of the spectrum here, from Philadelphia to Trenton, you have the most jobs in the area and the most jobs available in the area. For people along that route, they can either go to Trenton for work, or they can go to Philly for work, or in Camden.

Now, we've been talking about a billion dollars plus. It's \$604 million, is what the bonds actually were. And yes, you can add on the money there. That, basically, services four counties and fourteen towns. That's who will benefit from this \$604 million in bonds. And yet, we are passing through the Legislature right now-- We're going to have to do it again, because I was right as far as the special legislation went through to the City of Camden. One

city, we're talking about \$740 million for revitalization, which, by the way, has a component in there that will revitalize the area around the light rail.

We're talking about two different-- We're beating up on a previous administration. And let me tell you, it's not only the Democrats that have done this. Republicans have beat up on former administrations also. We beat up on Florio. They're beating up on Whitman. We have to understand, this project stands on its own. It's a good project. It's good for the area. It's good for the State. There's certain things that have to be done. Yes, we can learn. But my advice to New Jersey Transit is, start looking at both ends of the spectrum here on the ends of these lines.

One of the things that I'm looking for in my area is, they're saying, "Well, there may not be enough ridership, again, into my area, and they're only going to go up to 10 miles south of my area." I'm saying you have to think outside the box. If you go a couple of miles further than the New Jersey border into New York, all of a sudden you have a bistate plan that UMTA now says is better. That's what I'm referring to here. If you have the Philadelphia component, it becomes a bistate program, and you can get much more funding. I don't know if we can go retroactively to do that, but there's a lot of things that can happen.

This whole situation here -- we beat up on the project, but it is a situation where we're actually having our cake and eating it. Because we're having the benefit of beating up on the former administration, but, yes, you're going to keep this project, and the project is going to be successful. Believe me, when you see what this does to this area, you'll be very proud of it and so will the State.

I know up in -- about 80 years ago, there were three rail lines that were brought up into Bergen County. At that time, it was rural, farmlands. When they brought those rail lines in, they started developing. They did redeveloping, developing this beautiful area now. We are the most densely populated. We're the largest county in the state. Now we're about a million people in Bergen County, predominantly because of passenger service. Where is the passenger service going? To the jobs in New York City. And that's what's going to happen here.

I thank you for the opportunity to put that on the record.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SARLO: Just thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your hospitality and to the people of Burlington County, Camden County. I think we have a very talented new Commissioner at the DOT, and I have the utmost confidence that he will be able to work through a lot of these little quirks and blips on the radar screen. I think he's a very talented person. I think he will provide us with the right leadership at the helm of the Department.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN STENDER: Just thank you to you and to all the people present.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: You're welcome.

The meeting is adjourned.

Thank you.

**(HEARING CONCLUDED)**