

Watchdog Groups: Passage of Bill is Step Forward for Port Authority Accountability

Work remains as billions in capital spending remains hard to track

The Port Authority is still emerging from one of the most difficult episodes in its history, and this legislation provides a building block for a more accountable and transparent organization. We are glad to see New York pass the bill and hope New Jersey will follow suit.

We are very aware that this bill is a beginning, and the Port Authority has more work to do to increase transparency and regain public trust.

Just the same, A8298 / S5998 is a clear step forward, and we thank Governor Cuomo for signing it. We applaud Assemblymember Jim Brennan and Senator Andrew Lanza for doing the hard work of getting this complex legislation passed and signed. The legislation accomplishes the following:

- a more streamlined governance structure that will hopefully result in more bi-state cooperation,
- stricter ethics policies including adoption of a whistleblower policy,
- greater public accountability of the Port Authority through more detailed financial reporting, including notification regarding the disposition of property,
- increased public notification and comment periods for fare and toll increases.

In addition to the governance and ethics provisions included in this bill, our groups urge the Port Authority and its board to make a concerted effort to make capital spending more transparent and easier to track. The "ten year" capital plan,

passed two years ago with much fanfare, is already out of date and it is difficult for the public to monitor major capital projects worth billions of dollars, like the Bayonne and Goethals Bridges.

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