

October 16, 2017

AN OPEN LETTER FROM CHAIRMAN KEVIN O'TOOLE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RICK COTTON TO OUR VALUED STAFF:



SINCE WE BEGAN OUR TENURES AS CHAIRMAN AND EXECUTIVE Director, we've had the opportunity to tour Port Authority facilities to learn more about their operation and the remarkable people who manage and maintain them. We share a common goal, to provide the highest level of service to the traveling public and to support the projects, big and small, that will help us achieve it.

On Friday, we joined elected officials from New Jersey and our regional and national transportation partners in Kearny, N.J., to celebrate a major milestone for the Gateway program – groundbreaking for a new, more reliable Portal North Bridge. This is the first component of the nation's biggest and most critical infrastructure undertaking, in which the Port Authority is taking a leadership role.

Portal North Bridge is an essential element of the regional transportation network and the entire Northeast Corridor. But the 107-year-old swing bridge has outlived its usefulness. Its higher-clearance, fixed-span replacement will allow for faster speeds, increased train capacity, and the elimination of a single point of potential failure along the busiest stretch of railroad in North America, supporting 450 trains a day, with an estimated 200,000 passenger trips.



Port Authority Executive Director Rick Cotton (left) and Chairman Kevin O'Toole (center) discuss the Gateway program with U.S. Sen. Cory Booker.

A NJ Transit express train crosses the Portal North Bridge, which is slated for replacement by a new span as the first component of the Gateway Program.



With the bridge in the background, Gateway Program Development Corporation Chairman Richard Bagger addresses assembled dignitaries.



Friday's groundbreaking was evidence of the progress, cooperation and commitment of all Gateway partners, including the Port Authority, to a program of such enormous regional and national significance. The Board of Commissioners committed to support debt service on \$2.7 billion for Gateway in the 10-year capital program passed earlier this year, including an authorization of \$284 million toward financing of the new Portal North span.

The Port Authority and you, our valued employees, continue to play an integral leadership role, with important contributions to Gateway and through our core investments in the day-to-day operations of the trans-Hudson network. We are dedicated to building and maintaining strong bi-state cooperation, and making the critical investments that best meet and serve the transportation and economic needs of the traveling public.

Sincerely,

Kevin O'Toole, Chairman

Rick Cotton, Executive Director



Gateway partners and supporters join New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and U.S. Senators Booker and Menendez, as they grab a shovel for the new Portal North Bridge groundbreaking.