



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 545

Resolution urging the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to quickly select a solution to the Bayonne Bridge height issue so that super ships can be accommodated once the widening of the Panama Canal is completed in 2015.

By Council Members Nelson, Fidler, Gentile, Lander and Rose

Whereas, According to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (Port Authority), the Port of New York and New Jersey (Port) is the largest port on the East Coast and the third-largest in the nation, supporting approximately 269,000 jobs in the region and providing \$5 billion in annual federal, state and local tax revenues; and

Whereas, The Bayonne Bridge, which was built by the Port Authority and opened in 1931, goes over the Kill van Kull and connects Staten Island to Bayonne, New Jersey; and

Whereas, Up until the New River Gorge Bridge in West Virginia was completed in 1977, the Bayonne Bridge was the world's longest steel-arch bridge with an arch of 1,675 feet; and

Whereas, In the 1930s, the United States Navy's tallest ships could pass under the bridge's 151 feet clearance, from the surface of the water to the under side of the bridge, however, this height now presents a navigational challenge for some vessels today; and

Whereas, After the Panama Canal expansion is completed, which is estimated to occur in 2015, it will be easier for massive new container ships to access the east coast seaports yet, these ships will be unable to enter the Port of New York and New Jersey due to the height of the Bayonne Bridge; and

Whereas, In 2008, the Port Authority commissioned the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to perform an assessment of the economic benefits of a remedy to the height challenge and

consequences of not doing anything; and

Whereas, The USACE report concluded that the national economic benefits that would come from fixing the problem would far outweigh the costs; and

Whereas, Some of the solutions that are being considered are jacking up the current road deck, creating a lift bridge mechanism at the center of the bridge, or building a brand new bridge or tunnel; and

Whereas, According to the USACE study, jacking up the bridge would produce \$169 million in average annual net benefits over the 50-year project life, a new bridge would produce \$148 million, a bored tunnel would produce \$150 million, and an immersed tunnel would create \$93 million in average annual net benefits; and

Whereas, The USACE report also recommends that the Port Authority undertake further analyses to identify the best bridge or non-bridge alternative; and

Whereas, In following with the recommendations, the Port Authority's Board of Commissioners approved \$10 million in 2009 to complete a planning analyses that would recommend a course of action and project alternatives; and

Whereas, While the analysis is still underway, the Port Authority Board announced in September 2010 that it will provide up to \$1 billion in its capital planning process to finance a solution for the bridge; and

Whereas, If the Port Authority does not find a solution soon, it will cost the Port thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in commerce and since most of the options for the bridge will take numerous years to complete, time is running out for a solution; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York urges the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to quickly select a solution to the Bayonne Bridge height issue so that super ships can be accommodated once the widening of the Panama Canal is completed in 2015.

CFP
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