



News for Immediate Release

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Pennsylvania, New Jersey Propose Public-Private Partnership to Revamp Scudder Falls Bridge

Goal Is to Improve Safety, Alleviate Congestion on Outdated I-95 Crossing

Lower Makefield Township, PA – The narrow, heavily traveled Scudder Falls Bridge carrying Interstate 95 over the Delaware River would undergo major renovations through a public-private partnership, under a plan to be proposed by Governors Edward G. Rendell of Pennsylvania and Chris Christie of New Jersey.

The project would be the nation's first multi-state public-private partnership, or P3.

The governors are directing the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission, or DRJTBC, which operates and maintains the 50-year-old span, to pursue the \$310 million modernization project starting next month by soliciting requests for proposals.

New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner James Simpson and Frank McCartney, Executive Director of the DRJTBC, joined Governor Rendell at a news conference to announce the proposal today on the Pennsylvania side of the bridge in Bucks County.

"This bridge is in critical need of improvement for safety reasons, and motorists who travel it are in dire need of relief from the daily bottleneck that it causes on I-95," Governor Rendell said. "By creating a public-private partnership, we can complete construction more quickly and efficiently, while allowing the Bridge Commission to focus on ongoing construction and maintenance projects on its other 19 bridges."

"As one of the heaviest-trafficked routes across the Delaware River, the Scudder Falls Bridge is in need of serious maintenance and modernization," said Commissioner Simpson. "In these difficult fiscal times, it is critical that we find creative ways to make improvements and deliver services that are efficient and cost-effective for taxpayers. This public-private partnership will provide exactly that type of solution to move forward with the improvements that are needed at Scudder Falls Bridge and provide relief to drivers on I-95."

Designed in the late 1950s, Scudder Falls Bridge – which has two lanes in each direction and no shoulder – handles nearly 60,000 vehicles daily and is the scene of 105 crashes annually. At peak hours, the average delay for a motorist trying to

cross the span is 27 minutes. It is classified as "Functionally Obsolete" under the Federal Highway Administration rating system, and receives Current Level Service Grade of "F" on a rating scale used by highway engineers.

The plan calls for the surface to be widened to three lanes in each direction, plus three additional auxiliary lanes and a wider median. The project also includes reconfiguration of nearby interchanges on both sides of the river, and improvements to adjoining I-95 highway segments.

The project cost includes \$132 million for the bridge and \$89 million to each state for improvements to approaches to the span.

Tolls between \$1 and \$2 for commuter vehicles and \$4 per axle for trucks would pay for the upgrade of the bridge, which is not currently tolled. Without new tolls, existing DRJTBC tolls would have to increase substantially, or Pennsylvania and New Jersey would need to subsidize the project, which neither state is capable of doing at this time.

"This is a public safety issue. We will improve safety conditions on the bridge and the adjoining highways, and ensure critical access for community facilities and emergency services between the two states, especially during the hours of heavy travel when the bridge is now jammed solid with traffic," Governor Rendell said.

The governors will ask the DRJTBC to convene a meeting in August to issue an RFP for legal and financial services. The winning team will assess the best structure for the deal based on a market analysis, and work with the DRJTBC on an RFP for design, building, financing and operating the new bridge. A team would then be chosen to complete the project and operate the bridge with Commission oversight.

The Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission was formed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey in 1934. It operates seven toll bridges and 13 toll-supported bridges, two of which are pedestrian-only spans. The Commission's jurisdiction extends along the Delaware River from the Philadelphia-Bucks County line north to the New Jersey/New York border. The bridges carried more than 139.5 million cars and trucks in 2009.

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