Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 15, 2011

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We write to express our opposition to the demand that the taxpayers of New Jersey pay the federal government $271 million because the Access to the Region's Core (ARC) project was cancelled. While some of us may differ on whether or not the ARC project should have been cancelled, we are united in our effort to protect New Jersey taxpayers from harm.

We are deeply concerned that forcing New Jersey to pay these funds will undermine efforts for a new Trans-Hudson tunnel, and require the State to postpone or cancel other essential, job-creating transit projects throughout the State. This will only exacerbate the State's transportation and economic challenges, and impose an unfair burden on taxpayers in New Jersey.

As you know, Amtrak is now preparing to begin preliminary engineering and design of the proposed "Gateway" tunnel, which could utilize some of the design and data developed for ARC. Use of these resources for the proposed Gateway project, or the possible extension of the New York City No. 7 Subway into New Jersey, has the potential to lower some of the costs and expedite the delivery of these initiatives.

Demand for commuter rail capacity between New Jersey and New York City is expected to double in the near future, and it is critical that the federal and state governments work cooperatively to ensure that we tackle these problems in a meaningful and responsible way. We thank you for your clear commitment to the goal of a new trans-Hudson rail crossing, and look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Lautenberg, Senator | Robert Menendez, Senator | Christopher H. Smith, M.C.

Frank Pallone, Jr., M.C. | Rodney Frelinghuysen, M.C. | Donald M. Payne, M.C.

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