



**New Jersey
Bike & Walk
Coalition**



**January 19, 2016
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

For more information, contact:

Aaron Hyndman, aaron.hyndman@njbwc.org, 908-627-2306

Janna Chernetz, janna@tstc.org, 609-271-0778

NJ Bike & Walk Coalition and Tri-State Transportation Campaign Criticize Governor Christie's "Pocket Veto" of Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Bill

MONCLAIR, N.J. (Jan. 19, 2015) – Governor Chris Christie's failure to sign a bill that would have advanced pedestrian and bicyclist safety in New Jersey needlessly puts the lives of New Jersey's 9 million residents and millions more tourists and workers in jeopardy. The bill (S2521/A3888), which passed unanimously in both the Senate and Assembly, received a so-called "pocket veto" from Governor Christie, who allowed it to expire today upon the close of the previous legislative session.

"The governor had the opportunity handed to him by a unanimous legislature to focus on one of the state's most grave problems: having one of the nation's worst pedestrian and bicyclist fatality rates," said Cyndi Steiner, Executive Director of the NJ Bike & Walk Coalition. "Instead, Governor Christie has chosen to ignore the importance of this statistic and its implications for quality of life in New Jersey."

S2521/A3888 would have established a new Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Advisory Council empowered to take action to improve the state's dismal pedestrian and bicycle safety record. The new Council would have served a vital role in facilitating cooperation and coordination between governmental and private agencies concerning bicycle and pedestrian safety. Most importantly, the Council would have been authorized to review statutory law and regulations and to advise policymakers on best practices for ensuring the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians.

"As bicycle and pedestrian fatalities account for one-third of NJ's traffic fatalities, this is a missed opportunity for New Jersey to work in a collaborative way across many stakeholders to address the state's high pedestrian fatality rate," said Janna Chernetz, Director, New Jersey Policy for Tri-State Transportation Campaign.

The bill was sponsored by senators Nia Gill and Diane Allen, and Pamela R. Lampitt, Daniel R. Benson, Valerie Vainieri Huttel, and Tim Eustace in the Assembly, and would have created an 18-member Council

to review, analyze and report on a number of issues related to pedestrian and bicycle safety, including the type of motor vehicle violations that are contributing factors in pedestrian and bicycle crashes.

Governor Christie's veto of this bill ignores New Jersey's federal designation as a Pedestrian Focus state and is an injustice to the hundreds of pedestrian and bicyclists lives lost each year on New Jersey roadways. New Jersey used to lead on ensuring its streets were safe for all users of the road. Today, New Jersey doesn't even follow efforts enacted by neighbors in New York and Pennsylvania to improve traffic safety for all.

###

The New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition is a statewide advocacy organization for bicyclists and pedestrians. NJBWC is dedicated to protecting the rights and safety of New Jersey's bicyclists and walkers, promoting bicycling and walking for fun, fitness, and transportation, educating cyclists, walkers, and drivers about our rights and responsibilities, and connecting our communities with a smarter transportation system. NJBWC is a collective voice for everyone who believes that a safer, more rideable and walkable New Jersey means a more livable, sustainable New Jersey.

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit organization working toward a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey.