



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Tri-State Transportation Campaign Statement on Independent Analysis of North River Tunnel Rehabilitation**

*A new report released by London Bridges Associates on Monday claims that the existing, century-old cross-Hudson rail tunnels can be repaired over nights and weekends, without first building new tunnels as originally planned by Amtrak. In response, Tri-State Transportation Campaign released the following statement:*

“The proposed \$13 billion Gateway tunnels are the centerpiece of Amtrak’s \$30 billion capital program to modernize the Northeast Corridor and is one of the most important infrastructure projects in the United States. With the incoming Biden administration, the plan is finally on track to move forward after years of political gaming has mired the project in delays. \$1.5 billion has already been approved for right of way acquisitions needed to move the project forward, but this funding has yet to be released by the Department of Transportation. Additionally, the record of decision for the project’s environmental impact statement has been sitting on the Federal Railroad Administration’s desk since February 2018.

“There are many unknowns to the new approach outlined in the report, including whether or not it will really work given the exceptionally large and heavy electrical cables in the Hudson tunnels. Furthermore, the Gateway Program lost years of progress under the Trump Administration, time that the tunnels and the region could not afford to lose. January 20, 2020 must be day one of moving this project forward, and if this new approach risks creating further delay just as a new administration and Secretary of Transportation are taking over, it may not be worth the money it may save.

“The Gateway tunnels will double rail capacity and create hundreds of thousands of jobs, while reducing transportation-related carbon emissions by more than 180,000 tons every year. Should one of the existing tunnels fail before the new set is complete, roughly 72,000 commuters will be stranded, many of whom may opt to drive, further exacerbating congestion and air pollution.

“The possible merits of the new plan are not yet known, but what remains exceptionally clear is that these tunnels are a linchpin to the success of the regional and national economies. The



northeast corridor megaregion produces \$3 trillion in economic output, comprising a full 20 percent of the national GDP. Amtrak's ability to run trains without unnecessary delays is key to economic growth and meeting the region's transit needs. The existing tunnels must be repaired and expanded; they are already dramatically over-taxed and at risk of failure. Delays could jeopardize our region's economic rebound as well as the willingness of commuters to return to New York City.

"If this plan can work in a timely manner, provide for the safety of riders, and save money, great. However, if it causes lengthy and costly delays to launching the construction of the tunnels, we encourage the Gateway Development Corporation to continue the project as planned. Without it, New Jersey will continue to be limited in its efforts to expand NJ Transit rail service, and New York will lose out on greater access to the region's labor force."

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*Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a 27-year old advocacy organization that fights for an equitable, safe, multi-modal transportation network that provides options and supports the economies of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. TSTC works to fix our commutes, meet our climate goals, stop traffic deaths, and make transportation fair.*