

**Bike Walk Alliance of Westchester & Putnam
Concerned Citizens for Responsible Development
Empire State Future
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Advocates
Federated Conservationists of Westchester County
Good Jobs New York
League of Women Voters of New York State
New York Bicycling Coalition
New York League of Conservation Voters
New York Public Interest Research Group
New York State Transportation Equity Alliance
Natural Resources Defense Council
Transportation Alternatives
Tri-State Transportation Campaign**

October 24, 2011

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

RE: Tappan Zee Bridge

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Our organizations write with serious environmental, transportation, economic and government accountability concerns regarding the proposal to replace the Tappan Zee Bridge in Westchester and Rockland Counties.

Eliminating public transportation in the bridge replacement ignores the facts, findings and public consensus that have developed over a decade in 280 public meetings. This move undermines the public's faith in government and erodes trust of elected leaders.

We urge you to take a step back and include bus rapid transit in the Tappan Zee Bridge replacement and pursue a process that is more open, transparent and responsive to the desires of New Yorkers. We also urge you to ensure that biking and walking is accommodated on the new bridge.

Specifically, we ask that you ensure that bus rapid transit and a multi-use path are included in all the alternatives studied in the Environmental Impact Statement, and that all public documents

related to the Tappan Zee/I-287 Environmental Review, and nine year public process, are maintained on the agency's website (www.tzbsite.com).

The need for public transportation in the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 corridor is widely supported and documented. "Mass transit offers the only realistic means of addressing the requirements of improving mobility in the corridor," said a New York State Department of Transportation Scoping Summary in May 2009. Public transit was widely supported by Hudson Valley residents and expected to speed commutes and be an economic development backbone for the Hudson Valley, accommodating population growth, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and slowing consumption of open space. The bus rapid transit across the corridor was predicted to be especially effective, serving 50,000 riders each weekday.

This is why, until your announcement earlier this month, all of the alternatives that were being considered for the bridge replacement included public transportation. The proposal you announced last week completely changed course. Now, transit is not part of the plan, but could be added at some later date.

Our groups believe that if we don't build public transportation along the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 corridor now, it will never happen. The George Washington Bridge was supposed to accommodate transit in a later phase, but the public transportation was obviously never built. Building a Tappan Zee Bridge without bus rapid transit would be missing a once in a lifetime opportunity to benefit from the environmental and job creation benefits of public transportation.

All of our groups support the replacement of the Tappan Zee Bridge and infrastructure investment as a way to create jobs during the economic downturn. But we urge you to pursue a proposal that is more accountable and responsive to the desires of New Yorkers. Bus rapid transit must be part of the Tappan Zee Bridge replacement.

Sincerely,

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Honorable C. Scott Vanderhoef, Rockland County Executive

Honorable Harriet Cornell, Chairwoman, Rockland County Legislature
Honorable Ken Jenkins, Chairman, Westchester County Legislator
Joan McDonald, Commissioner, New York State Department of Transportation
Victor Mendez, Federal Highway Administrator