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Contact: Jim Barry
Steve Schapiro
609-963-1975

I-80 eastbound expected to remain closed for another two months in Wharton, Morris County

Crossover lane being finalized to shift one lane onto I-80 westbound

(Trenton) – I-80 eastbound is expected to remain closed for approximately two more months as emergency repairs continue between Exit 34 and the Bridge over Route 15 in Wharton, Morris County. Drilling and grouting operations, which are stabilizing the roadway and outlining the area that will require more extensive repairs, are expected to take approximately four more weeks to complete.

In addition, the Department is finalizing a design to build a crossover to shift one lane of I-80 eastbound traffic onto I-80 westbound, which would reduce westbound traffic to two lanes. The goal is to keep tractor trailers and other large commercial vehicles on I-80 and remove them from the detour and alternate routes, which will remain in place. Once the crossover design is finalized, it will take approximately two weeks to construct.

“The drilling and grouting work is outlining the area that will require a more extensive repair. We expect to measure progress not by how many locations are drilled and grouted each day, but by how many days each location will take to be drilled and grouted,” **NJDOT Commissioner Fran O’Connor** said. “This phase of the repair is expected to take another four weeks, with the entire repair likely to take about two months. We are finalizing a design to build a crossover to shift one lane of I-80 eastbound traffic onto I-80 westbound. The goal is to keep tractor trailers on I-80 and alleviate some of the traffic in local communities.

“We appreciate the public’s patience and understanding as repairs continue and thank our local partners and the New Jersey State Police for their efforts to help manage a challenging situation for all of us – the crews working around the clock, the motorists that have been impacted, and the residents and businesses in the neighboring communities.”

“After speaking with Commissioner O’Connor, I’m optimistic about the progress NJDOT crews are making and the work being completed in regards to the drilling and grouting repairs,” said **Senate Republican Leader Anthony M. Bucco** (R-25). “This is essential in order to identify the extent of the problem. Additionally, it is welcomed news that plans are being finalizing for a crossover design that will shift one lane of eastbound traffic onto the westbound lanes. This measure will hopefully ease the burden of truck traffic in our communities by reducing their reliance on detours and alternate routes. Lastly, I recognize the significant disruption this has caused to everyday life and we are fully committed to resolving the issue as swiftly, and more importantly, as safely as possible. If you have any questions please reach out to my office for assistance.”

"I am encouraged by the progress being made on the I-80 repairs, even though we know this repair will take some time," **Assemblywoman Aura K. Dunn** said. "NJDOT and local officials are working hard to ensure the safety of the roadway, and I will continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure the work is completed efficiently. I appreciate everyone's patience."

"The swift, round the clock work of NJDOT has been nothing short of miraculous," **Assemblyman Christian E. Barranco** said. "I know there is still a lot of work to do, and would like to thank Commissioner Fran O'Connor, the NJDOT staff and the laborers for their hard work repairing I-80."

EMERGENCY REPAIR PHASES

The path to completing emergency repairs and reopening I-80 eastbound has several phases. The timing for each phase has not yet been determined. However, the entire repair is expected to take approximately two months:

- **Geotechnical tests** to assess the condition of the roadway base **are complete**. These tests established our work area and helped identify approximately 150 locations to drill and grout.
- **Drilling and grouting operations** to probe subsurface conditions **are expected to take approximately four more weeks to complete**. This work is stabilizing the area under the roadway by filling holes, loose soil, and small voids and is outlining the area where a more extensive repair is required.

As of this afternoon, Friday, March 14, 135 locations, or about 90 percent, have been drilled, and 114 locations, or more than 75 percent, have been filled with grout.

The remaining locations are expected to take more time than the locations that have been completed because they are closer to the area of greatest concern, and the work must be done more carefully. This type of operation requires a high degree of precision and measurements. To do so safely, the contractor is proceeding with extreme caution in the affected area.

- **Repairing the sinkhole** will be the next phase. The repair will be similar to the design implemented in December. It will include excavating the area, installing a base of large stone with a wire mesh on top. More stone and a concrete layer will go over the wire mesh. Additional fill and soil will be placed on top of the concrete and compacted before several layers of asphalt will be applied to reconstruct the road.
- **Quality assurance testing** will be done while repairs are being made and following completion of the repair to ensure the long-term stability of the roadway and the integrity of the repairs.
- **Installing a monitoring system** to track surface and underground conditions will be done as part of the repair. There will be three types of monitors. Remote sensing

technology on poles will scan the pavement for changes, while sensors beneath the road will detect early signs of subsurface movement. Deeper underground devices will monitor long-term soil stability.

- **Milling and paving** the work area for a safe, smooth driving surface and reopening the road is the final phase.

EMERGENCY FUNDING

The Governor's Emergency Declaration on March 8 was one step in the process to apply for emergency federal funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). NJDOT is working with the FHWA New Jersey Division Office to prepare a package detailing the extent of the emergency and need for federal assistance, which is submitted to the Secretary of Transportation. If approved, this funding would be used to pay for the cost of repairing the highway.

TRAFFIC MITIGATION

The Department is continuing to work closely with local officials and the New Jersey State Police to improve mobility along the detour and alternate routes in the region. NJDOT has adjusted the timing of signals on Route 15, Route 10, and Route 46, which serve as the detour and alternate routes, respectively. NJDOT and New Jersey State Police will continue to monitor traffic conditions and make adjustments as necessary to mitigate delays. We ask motorists to avoid the area, plan extra travel time, and be patient while repairs are ongoing.

In addition, NJDOT is using technology to send messages to commercial truckers to provide information about the closure, detour, and alternate routes. The Department is also using digital messaging signs and working with our regional transportation partners to share information so drivers can make informed decisions about potential alternate routes to take.

DETOURS AND ALTERNATE ROUTES

I-80 eastbound traffic is being detoured at Exit 34. The following detour remains in place:

I-80 eastbound Exit 34 Detour:

- Motorists on I-80 eastbound are being directed to take Exit 34 to Route 15/Wharton/Dover/Sparta
- At the end of the ramp, stay right following signs for Route 15/Jefferson/Dover/Sparta/Picatinny Arsenal
- **Stay in the right lane on North Main Street** following signs for Route 15 North/Jefferson/Sparta
- **Bear right toward Route 15 northbound/Picatinny Arsenal**
- At the traffic signal, merge onto Route 15 northbound
- Stay left, following signs for Pondview Drive/U and Left Turns
- Using both lanes, make a U-turn at the Pondview Drive traffic signal and merge onto Route 15 southbound
- Stay left to take the exit to I-80 eastbound

Traffic is advised to use Exit 28 to take Route 10 eastbound or Route 46 eastbound as an alternate route to avoid the area. This exit is several miles before the closure:

Route 10 eastbound Alternate Route:

- Motorists on I-80 eastbound are advised to take Exit 28/Route 46 eastbound to Route 10/Ledgewood/Lake Hopatcong, *which is several miles before the closure*
- Continue on Route 46 eastbound
- Stay right to take Route 10 eastbound
- Take the exit to I-287 northbound
- Stay right to take the ramp to I-80 eastbound

Route 46 eastbound Alternate Route:

- Motorists on I-80 eastbound are advised to take Exit 28/Route 46 eastbound to Route 10/Ledgewood/Lake Hopatcong, *which is several miles before the closure*
- Continue on Route 46 eastbound
- Stay in the two left lanes to turn left at the traffic signal to continue on Route 46 eastbound
- Turn left onto Route 15 northbound in Dover, back to I-80
or
- Continue on Route 46 eastbound for about 12 miles and stay left for I-80 eastbound

Motorists are encouraged to check NJDOT's traffic information website www.511nj.org for construction updates and real-time travel information. For NJDOT news follow us on X (Twitter) [@NewJerseyDOT](https://twitter.com/NewJerseyDOT), on the [NJDOT Facebook page](#), or Instagram [@NewJersey.DOT](https://www.instagram.com/NewJersey.DOT).

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