

**Regional Plan Association
April 27, 2018**

Good morning!

Let me begin by thanking the Regional Plan Association for the invitation to join you this morning – especially Chairman Scott Rechler and President Tom Wright, who invited me today.

I must also recognize the work of Rohit Aggerwala, the chairman of the Committee on the Fourth Regional Plan.

The fact that we are here to talk about ways to build a stronger and fairer tomorrow for our region speaks volumes about the work of the RPA and the vision of the Fourth Regional Plan.

Governor Jim Florio, thank you for that gracious introduction.

Governor Florio has entered our history books as a principled leader who didn't shrink from making the tough and responsible decisions necessary to move New Jersey forward. He always knew that while we serve in the moment, we govern for the future.

I'll choose one quick example of this – it was his support for enacting New Jersey's tough ban on assault weapons, which still stands today because of his willingness to rally the people of New Jersey against both a hostile Legislature and the gun lobby.

Governor Florio's efforts to keep New Jerseyans safer from gun violence won him the 1993 Profile in Courage Award from the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation. Twenty-five years later, we see the wisdom of your actions.

Governor Florio, I thank you for your leadership, friendship, and always welcome your advice and counsel. And, congratulations on the publication of your new book!

This type of leadership – forward-looking and broad in scope – is the type of leadership I am working to provide for our state. I believe it is the type of leadership Kevin Corbett, who is joining you as a panelist today, will provide at NJTRANSIT, to get it back to the place where it is once again a national model for efficient, safe, and reliable mass transit.

On that note, I must also give a quick congratulation to my friend, Tony Coscia, who is receiving this year's John Zuccotti Award. I don't need to go into his credentials, but on a personal level, Tony's insights on infrastructure, especially, have been invaluable, and this distinction is richly deserved.

Our region is stronger because of his work at the Port Authority – the New York skyline of today is a testament to his vision – and, now, with Amtrak, he is continuing his service. And, New Jersey is definitely better because of the decade he spent years ago as Chairman of our state's Economic Development Authority. I like to think we gave him his start.

I regret that I won't be here later to listen to Hillary Clinton, my dear friend and former boss when I served as the United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany.

Finally, I must mention, in absentia, my colleagues in governing, Governors Andrew Cuomo and Dan Malloy. Certainly, we all want what's best for our individual states, but let there be no doubt,

we each recognize the tremendous importance of working together, and ensuring that our entire neighborhood succeeds.

Today is just Day 102 of my administration, but already New Jersey is moving in a new direction, and we are positioned to play our part in this success. For eight years we had allowed ourselves to be content with decisions made just to get us through the next day or to the next election, but without looking much beyond that.

We had not only lost our way, we forgot where it was we were even going. This was absolutely antithetical to the core values we hold so dear in New Jersey.

We had always prided ourselves on thinking big and acting bold. We put our focus on smart planning, and maximizing our built-in assets – our location, our people, and our ingenuity. Everything we need flows from recreating that economy of opportunity, and we know we don't get New Jersey right until we get that right.

Now, we are getting back to once again being a state which delivers value for our taxpayers by supporting and protecting their values. We have instituted a new mindset and culture. It is for this reason that I am so honored to be here this morning.

In New Jersey, we recognize that we need to get back to providing the “value for money” that historically made us an attractive place to live and do business. Yes, the northeast, and New Jersey, will never be the least expensive place, but we deliver value by investing in the right things – strong public schools and world-class colleges and universities, walkable and exciting downtowns, affordable housing, and safe and reliable mass transit and infrastructure.

The aspirations we have for New Jersey and the aspirations you have set for our region align.

We are reinvesting in our public schools, and taking the first step to making community college tuition-free for all residents, which is critical to closing the skills gap. We are also nearly tripling – yes, tripling – the state's investment in NJTRANSIT, so Kevin and his team will have the resources they need to restore commuter confidence in the network of buses and trains that connect cities within New Jersey, and which connects us, so importantly, with New York.

Already, we are turning NJTRANSIT around for the better. First, our increased investment means there will be no fare hike for commuters, at least until July 2019. We also have entered into a lease agreement with Maryland's rail system for additional cars to relieve overcrowding, and are revamping internal processes to get stock back out and rolling again. For the buses, NJTRANSIT will be hiring 40 new drivers, targeting relief on overcrowded routes, and taking steps to get more routes – both intra- and inter-state – back to running on-time.

We are also all-in on getting the Gateway Program funded. We are keenly aware of the connection between reliable rail service and our regional economic prospects. Quite frankly, businesses aren't going to invest in areas where their workforce isn't going to be able to make it to work.

I remain optimistic that, in partnership with the federal government, we will get Gateway built. We must. You know as I do, there is no infrastructure project in this entire nation as critical to our overall economy and security. And, I am committed to working with Governor Cuomo and Senator Schumer, along with the entire New York delegation and our entire delegation, headed by Senators Menendez and Booker, to get Gateway done.

I must also single out Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, who has been so instrumental in getting initial funding for Gateway passed.

In New Jersey, we are also preparing to take on a leading role in the replacement of the Portal Bridge, that aging linchpin along the Northeast Corridor, and the root cause of many train delays. I hope to have more on those specific steps in the days ahead.

But, beyond Gateway, our states need the federal government as a true partner in building critical infrastructure connections. In New Jersey, we are doing our part with a multi-billion-dollar annual transportation program at work creating good jobs and improving our roads and bridges – that’s what made putting our Transportation Trust Fund back on a solid footing so critical.

On any given day, 93,000 New Jersey daily commuters head into New York Penn Station. Another 85,000 ride buses to the Port Authority Terminal. Countless others rely upon our roads and bridges. We cannot get this system modernized and to where we know it should be quickly enough, and we cannot do it without regional – and federal – partnerships.

But our efforts aren’t just to improve the lives of commuters – we’re focused on creating economically stronger local communities.

We are restoring funding for dormant grant programs that help downtowns revitalize and leverage public dollars with private investment, and create new, affordable housing opportunities for our residents. We know that access to better housing creates healthier neighborhoods, and stronger downtowns, and that, in turn, will provide more of those residents good, family-supporting jobs. This is an all-inclusive approach to economic development.

And, rest assured, as we begin to implement our economic development agenda, transit-oriented development will be a focus.

And that is one of the reasons why no one is laughing that Newark is one of the finalists for Amazon’s HQ2 project. People are seeing what we can offer, both financially and intrinsically, and where we’re heading. This would be a transformative project for our state, but, even more importantly, it would spur investment in people and small businesses all across the region.

Newark has the people, it has the location, and it has Newark Fiber – the City’s own public fiber-optic network. And, that excitement in Newark is why I have such optimism for the future of Paterson, or for any city for that matter, in our state, especially when it comes to being homes for leaders in the innovation economy.

We’re already seeing the roots of the innovation economy taking hold in Jersey City, Hoboken, and Newark. Last month, I joined leaders from Rutgers University and our leading healthcare institutions to promote our vision for The Hub in New Brunswick, which we see as a center for cross-industry research and development.

Just as Cornell and New York City are doing on Roosevelt Island, we envision The Hub as the applied sciences center for New Jersey.

With more than \$650 million in research grants and sponsorships in the biomedical and health sciences, and its participation in the Big Ten Cancer Research Consortium, Rutgers-New Brunswick is among the top 20 public institutions in the nation.

On top of that, we add the City of New Brunswick, home to outstanding health care providers and hospitals, including RWJBarnabas and the Cancer Institute of New Jersey. Johnson & Johnson, one of the world's largest bio-pharmaceutical companies, is headquartered there, and many other companies are located within a radius of just a few miles. All of this, connected to New York and the world by NJTRANSIT and the New Jersey Turnpike.

We see The Hub as the place where the next generation of world-changing, innovative companies will be born.

We are custom-built for the innovation economy. We are renowned for having one of the world's most highly educated workforces, with 39 percent of our residents holding college degrees. We have the nation's fourth-highest percentage of millennials with college degrees. **We have the highest concentration of scientists and engineers per square mile in the entire world.**

For the needs of the innovation economy, we more than cover the spread.

This is just the beginning. A few weeks ago, I addressed a global business forum for the offshore wind energy industry. The site for this forum? New Jersey.

A year ago, this would have been unthinkable. But we are making a clear case for New Jersey to lead in the production of offshore wind energy. We have set a goal of 3,500 megawatts of offshore wind by 2030 – enough to power 1.5 million homes and businesses, and the most aggressive vision in the nation, if not the world.

Already, Orsted, a leading offshore energy company, is opening an office in Atlantic City as a first step toward their own plan for creating a 1,000-megawatt windfarm off our southern coastline – a coast we recently protected with a strong, new anti-offshore drilling law. This project will create up to 1,000 new, union construction jobs, and many good-paying permanent ones, too.

But we don't view our offshore wind capability as just part of our plan for recapturing our rightful space in innovation, it's part and parcel of our goal of creating a 100 percent clean energy New Jersey by 2050. In terms of jobs and the economy, this is the smart way to go. But, given our location as a coastal state, and vulnerability to climate change, it makes even more sense. It is, for us, if you will, existential.

Offshore wind also can't be just a New Jersey-only solution. I'm excited by the potential for our region to become a global offshore wind leader. That potential is one of the reasons I have made rejoining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative a top priority that we are fulfilling.

New ways to power our economy are a matter of smart policy and creating a more sustainable future. But we also need to look at clean energy as a means of addressing longstanding issues of environmental justice and personal health. I have visited the communities in our cities where children suffer from asthma rates many times more than their peers.

One of those communities – in Newark's South Ward – is within sight of the Port of Newark. Increasing our capacity for clean energy means we can electrify more of those operations,

protecting and creating jobs we need, without creating the air pollution we don't. That will also make these communities more inviting for outside investment, to create new jobs and housing, and it will mean cleaner air blowing across into New York City, as well.

This is just a small part of our broad vision for growing a fairer and stronger New Jersey. And, importantly and excitingly, these are just a few of the many direct lines between our vision and the RPA's vision as laid out in the Fourth Regional Plan.

Our administration has no interest in doing things the same old way. This is a transformative time for our state. In a way, we're lucky that we started where we did, at the bottom, because it allows us to think outside the box, to dream big, and to act bold.

We are going to get back to the smart planning that New Jersey was once renowned for. We know that our future economy will grow from our cities out, taking full advantage of our transit network, buttressed by thoughtful business incentive programs that invest in whole communities and revitalized downtowns, and all the while being led by our New Jersey values.

We know that by doing this, we can make our state a magnet for the innovative companies we need to create good jobs and do our part in securing a strong future for our entire region.

A Republican friend of mine once called me a "pro-growth progressive." I'll take that. It captures me and our mindset very well. To me, it signifies that I know that we can both do good and do well, and that we can create economic opportunity that falls in line with our core values. It captures nicely our guiding principle: economic progress can't be made without social progress, and social cannot be made without economic progress.

I feel that I'm probably in the company of many who feel as I do, that the naysayers who were writing our obituaries had it all wrong – instead, this is story of our rebirth. New Jersey is America's #1 turnaround story.

We have everything we need right here. We always have – our location, our people, our infrastructure. And, because of the RPA, we also have the roadmap to build a stronger future for millions of New Jerseyans, and for the millions more across the entire region who share in our economic future, and who will share in our success.

I thank you, all, for the ability to be with you this morning, and I look forward to working with you in the years ahead to bring this vision to life.

Thank you!