

**Testimony by Patrick J. Foye, Executive Director
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**U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine
Infrastructure
Hearing on Superstorm Sandy: The Devastating Impact
on the Nation's Largest Transportation Systems**

**Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C.
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Chairman Lautenberg, Ranking Member Wicker, and members of the committee, thank you for holding this important hearing.

Chairman Lautenberg, on behalf of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, I thank you for your tireless support of the Port Authority and the region. It is a privilege to testify before you and this esteemed committee.

I also want to thank Governors Andrew Cuomo of New York and Chris Christie of New Jersey for their strong leadership before, during and after Superstorm Sandy. We are truly fortunate to have such remarkable governors leading the region through this incredibly difficult time.

I am Pat Foye, Executive Director of The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. For those unfamiliar with our agency, we operate what is arguably the most important multi-mode transportation network in the world.

Our transportation assets include five airports, three of which comprise the busiest airport system in the country: JFK, LaGuardia, and Newark Airports. We also maintain and operate four bridges including the George Washington Bridge, the busiest vehicular crossing in the world, and the Holland and Lincoln tunnels, which link New York and New Jersey. Other assets include the world's busiest bus terminal; the largest port complex on the East Coast; and a bi-state commuter rail system known as PATH.

Annually, more than 109 million people use our airports, which also handle more than 2.1 million tons of cargo ... about 465 million people use our Hudson River and Staten Island bridges and tunnels ... 77 million people ride PATH ... and about 3.4 million cargo containers move through our ports. All told, we transport nearly 700 million people a year and billions of dollars worth of goods through our vital and indispensable transportation network.

As we all now know, however, Superstorm Sandy brought this critical transportation network to a complete halt just over a month ago. We knew this storm would be an unprecedented weather event with the potential for widespread damage, and under the direction of our governors, we took all possible precautions.

We conducted exercises and drills throughout the year for all types of hazards, including major weather events. Days before Sandy arrived, we filled and placed thousands of sandbags, we secured all items that could become flying debris, and we closed floodgates—in short, we did everything within our power to prepare. We also shut down vulnerable parts of our facilities on Sunday, October 28, a full day before the storm. For example, we took PATH out of service and brought our trains to higher ground. We followed suit at our airports, as airline tenants worked to cancel flights and move their aircraft out of the region.

When Sandy struck, it wasn't long before our facilities were overwhelmed by the historic storm surge that followed. On the evening of Monday, October 29, as the storm swept through, the tidal surge eventually reached over 13 feet. To put this in context, the 100-year flood level for lower Manhattan is 11 feet. Superstorm Sandy exceeded this level by more than two feet.

The destruction wrought by Superstorm Sandy on the Port Authority was unprecedented and it crippled our transportation system. Through the night and into early Tuesday morning, October 30, we saw widespread flooding and power outages, forcing us to close all of our facilities except for the Lincoln Tunnel and Stewart Airport—the only facilities largely spared from the storm in great part simply because of their geographical locations.

With the airports closed and airline carriers cancelling more than 10,000 flights, the ripple effect was far and wide. Fifteen to 20 percent of all U.S. flights pass through the Port Authority's airports, and 18 percent of our nation's international flights use New York as a gateway.

As soon as the storm subsided, we began assessing the damage at all of our facilities. Our ports suffered extensive flooding with toppled cargo containers, washed-out access roads, twisted rail track, barges and debris tossed about on piers, and, less visible—but perhaps more critical—damaged electrical infrastructure. The flooding at the ports disrupted the region's supply chain stranding cargo for weeks, and causing significant damage, including the destruction of more than 15,000 cars by the salt water.

At the airports, LaGuardia alone had an estimated 100 million gallons of seawater flood the airfield, and at one point, you could not distinguish parts of the aeronautical areas – our runways and taxiways - from Flushing Bay. Newark, JFK and Teterboro airports also suffered significant flooding and power outages.

The Port Authority Bus Terminal, the primary bus facility for New York City and the region, experienced a tremendous blow as commuter bus carriers completely halted their service. You can imagine the disruptions this caused for the 200,000 daily passengers who rely on the bus lines that serve the PABT between New York City and all of the outlying areas across several states. Sandy's impact to the region's commuter transportation network at the terminal continues to this day. The Holland Tunnel also flooded, forcing the closure of this vital transit link between New York and New Jersey for days.

As bad as the impact was to all of our facilities, it soon became apparent that PATH suffered the most severe blow. This vital interstate link that each year carries 77 million people between Newark, Jersey City, Hoboken, midtown Manhattan and lower Manhattan was completely devastated by flooding.

The historic storm surge flooded the PATH tunnels that were built more than 100 years ago underneath the Hudson River, soaking caissons containing racks of critical and decades-old

signal and communications equipment with corrosive seawater, causing extensive, and in some cases, irreparable damage.

Our PATH team worked around the clock to pump out the tunnels and stations and go through the painstaking process of restoring power to the substations, testing and repairing or replacing equipment along the entire route. One of our workers, Tom O'Neill, risked his own well-being jumping into several feet of floodwaters so he could restart a critical pump. Tom O'Neill, told me he was simply "doing his job," much like the hundreds of PATH workers still toiling around-the-clock to restore full service to our network, something I will describe in more detail in a minute.

First, let me give you a quick summary of our efforts to return the agency's operations to normal. By late Tuesday morning, October 30, just one day after the storm, we were able to reopen our four bridges, an action that was vital to re-establishing the interstate vehicular link as quickly as possible.

On Wednesday, October 31, remarkably less than two full days after the storm, JFK and Newark airports reopened, and the following day, Thursday, November 1, LaGuardia Airport restarted flight operations. Our airport operations and maintenance crews, together with the FAA, pumped out and restored critical airfield lighting and electronics on a remarkable timetable. They cleared mountains of debris, including boats and barges that had washed up on our runways in order to get the airports reopened and to get critically needed goods and people flowing into the region again.

By Friday, November 2, the Holland Tunnel, the interstate traffic artery between Jersey City and lower Manhattan severed by the storm, reopened to buses following one of many, many heroic efforts by Port Authority staff. In the case of the Holland Tunnel, our crews pumped out an estimated 20 million gallons of water from the tubes to return them to service.

By Sunday, November 4, after the U.S. Coast Guard had surveyed the harbor to ensure the safety of ships, the first container ships began arriving at our ports, and by the following day, all the port facilities had reopened.

As for PATH, thanks to round-the-clock efforts of our team, we were able to restore limited service on PATH on Tuesday, November 6, one week after the storm, between Jersey City and midtown Manhattan, and have since restored service to all our stations with the exception of Hoboken Terminal, which suffered the most significant damage. Hoboken Station serves 8.5 million passengers a year or the equivalent of 29,000 people every weekday, so restoring this service is our number one priority. To enable crews to work on critically needed repairs, we are currently running service between 5 a.m. and 10 p.m. This allows us to complete work that would otherwise take months longer.

The Port Authority has not traveled this difficult road alone. Many of the agency's partners including the USDOT, FRA and FTA have been incredibly supportive. I would be remiss if I didn't mention Invensys Rail, headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, whose teams have worked day and night to build a replacement switch system for us. In addition, the folks at Trilogy Communications in Pearl, Mississippi, who supplied us with 3,200 pounds of a critical communications cable on 36 hours notice over a weekend, no less. Also, the employees of Ansaldo based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania are building critical components so that we can restore PATH service fully and GE opened a factory in Puerto Rico at our request to manufacture replacement parts that haven't been made for years.

What happens in our Port District—and what happens *to* our Port District—affects the nation. Now we are concerned that losses in productivity as a direct result of Superstorm Sandy also will ripple throughout the country.

With PATH operating at less than full strength and as NJ Transit continues its efforts to return to full service, people are taking longer and longer to get to work and return home. What may normally have been a 45-minute commute for many has now doubled – or worse.

We are talking about impacts to millions of people: Regional businesses and government entities employ more than eight million workers, many of whom cannot move about without public transportation.

On a normal workday, up to one million travelers use the Port Authority's Interstate Transportation Network – whether by car, train, or ferry. Another example: Ten thousand people who work at LaGuardia, nearly half the workforce there, use public transportation. At JFK, the numbers are even greater: 55 percent of the workforce or more than 35,000 people rely on mass transit. When the MTA shuts down or runs limited service, it has a direct impact on our ability to run our airports—and an incalculable impact on the livelihoods of our region's households. We are a densely populated region, the nation's most concentrated economic center, all made possible by a vital, functioning transportation network.

The PATH system alone provides a critical transit link across the Hudson River. Commuters use PATH to travel to their offices and work locations in Lower Manhattan and Midtown and the current outages have caused significant additional burdens on workers and employers by shifting commuter flows onto already congested crossings. On a normal workday, 392,000 people travel to work in the NY metro region from New Jersey, while 127,000 travel from NY to the New Jersey counties of the Port Authority region. These last weeks have been anything but normal.

Our facilities have a tremendous impact on the regional and national economies. Our airports facilitate transport of passengers and cargo across the entire United States and the port facilities have been an increasingly important gateway for cargo on the Eastern Seaboard. Roughly 40 percent of all containerized cargo arriving at the port is destined for the Midwest or other locations in the country, so it is important that we do not lose sight of a central fact: recovering from Sandy is not a local issue for us; it is a national economic and security issue for everyone.

We will rebuild, but along with the States of New York and New Jersey, the Port Authority will need the federal government's help. The Port Authority receives no taxpayer money from either New York or New Jersey. We rely exclusively on user fees, rents and bonds, and all of those revenue streams have their limitations. We are still assessing exact costs of repair and recovery

and determining what insurance may cover, but clearly our needs are enormous: We are facing hundreds of millions of dollars in immediate repair costs, and billions more in mitigation and resiliency measures.

The Obama Administration and Congress have been such great partners throughout this process—and for that we are grateful. The costs no doubt will be high, but the costs—should we fail to make these repairs and investments—are unfathomable in terms of the cost of lost productivity, disabled economies, and a fractured transportation network.

The road ahead will be a challenge to us all, but with your help and support, I am confident we will rebuild better and stronger.

Thank you for all you have done, and for inviting me to speak today.

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