



# NEWS – Local 825

## International Union of Operating Engineers

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### **IUOE LOCAL 825 SUPPORTS TOLL INCREASE TO FUND IMPROVEMENTS RATHER THAN DRIVE UP MORE LONG-TERM DEBT**

**SPRINGFIELD, NJ** – Local 825 of the International Union of Operating Engineers announced its support for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey’s proposed toll increases to fund much-needed capital improvements that will create thousands of jobs and stimulate the region’s economy.

The announcement came in response to the Port Authority recommendation yesterday to raise tolls for the first time since 2008 and only the third time since 2001.

“With significant infrastructure improvements on the drawing boards, the Port Authority must be able to fund them,” said Greg Lalevee, business manager of Local 825, whose membership comprises more than 6,500 heavy equipment operators in New Jersey and five counties of New York state.

“These projects do more than hire workers,” Lalevee said. “They preserve the region’s economic vitality for the future and lead to even more jobs down the road.”

For example, the increases would pay to raise the Bayonne Bridge, which is too low to allow the larger ships that will come from Asia beginning in 2014, following completion of the Panama Canal expansion. If we were to lose this maritime traffic to competing ports, we would lose an economic engine that we have enjoyed for more than a hundred years, said Lalevee.

Other critically important projects for the region’s economy include:

- The expansion of Port Newark;
- The replacement of the Lincoln Tunnel helix to reduce congestion;
- The replacement of suspender cables on the George Washington Bridge;
- Replacement of the PATH’s 100-year old duct bank network;
- And security upgrades in area tunnels, airports and terminals.

“While nobody likes toll increases, we believe a “pay-as-you-go” approach funded by tolls is more responsible than a “spend-now, pay-later” approach, which only postpones progress and add millions of dollars in debt-load,” Lalevee said.

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