



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## New law directs Port Authority to assess how to widen and increase traffic flow of Outerbridge

ANDREW J. LANZA December 20, 2021



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*When the Outerbridge Crossing opened in 1928, it was intended to meet the growing travel needs after World War I. Nearly 512,000 vehicles crossed the bridge in its first year. Today that many vehicles pass over the Outerbridge Crossing each week. The Outerbridge Crossing is a vital link for Staten Island drivers. This bipartisan legislation is an important step toward a modern bridge that can enhance safety and ease congestion. Assemblyman Reilly and I look forward to working with Governor Hochul, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey,*

*and all stakeholders to advance this analysis to a shovel-ready project. I appreciate Governor Hochul signing this piece of legislation into law." -- State Senator Andrew Lanza*

Governor Kathy Hochul today signed legislation (S.4981/A.5095) directing the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to study the alignment and surrounding property of the Outerbridge Crossing between Staten Island and New Jersey. The purpose of the study is to determine the feasibility of physically widening the bridge and increasing the flow of traffic.

"The Outerbridge Crossing is used by some 30 million vehicles a year and is a large part of daily life for New Yorkers on the south shore of Staten Island, as well as the commuters from New Jersey who contribute so much to our state's economy," **Governor Hochul said.** "As it is currently built, the Outerbridge Crossing's narrow lanes and inadequate traffic flow are a frequent commuter headache. With this legislation we hope to expedite the process of dramatically improving quality of life and enhancing safety for commuters from New York and New Jersey alike."

Legislation S.4981/A.5095 directs the Port Authority, as part of an existing study on the feasibility of widening the bridge, to examine the alignment of the Outerbridge Crossing and the surrounding private properties to determine which of those properties would need to be acquired by the Port Authority in order to efficiently expand the bridge and increase the flow of traffic. Originally opened to traffic in 1928, the Outerbridge Crossing has in recent years been the subject of criticism from residents and local elected officials in both New York and New Jersey for frequent traffic congestion and much needed modernization.

Prior to the expiration of the existing study, the Port Authority will issue a report of its findings to the Governors of New York and New Jersey, the Majority Leader of the New York

State Senate, and the Speaker of the New York State Assembly. The statute will be effective when New Jersey passes the same legislation.

**Assemblymember Michael Reilly said,** "Today marks an important milestone in our mission to replace the 93-year old Outerbridge Crossing and brings us one step closer toward achieving our shared vision for a modern crossing that can better accommodate the demands of Staten Island's growing industrial industry. I want to thank Senator Lanza and our legislative colleagues on Staten Island for supporting this legislation, and, of course, Governor Hochul for signing this important legislation into law."

**Staten Island Borough President James Oddo said,** "Staten Islanders know far too well the utter chaos that ensues when there are traffic delays and backups coming home on a Sunday night through the Outerbridge. The extra vehicular volume results in frustration among the borough's drivers and the lack of capacity has been an issue for way too long. I want to thank Governor Hochul for signing a piece of legislation that hopes to relieve some of the defeat Staten Islanders feel when trying to get home by looking at widening the bridge and increasing traffic flow. I also have to extend gratitude to our partners in the state, Senator Andy Lanza and Assemblyman Mike Reilly, for always being the voices of Staten Island's quality of life."