

WHY THE NJ DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SHOULD LIMIT LARGE TRUCKS IN PRINCETON

The State of New Jersey has proposed **new rules that include Princeton's main roads in the New Jersey Access Network for trucks**. Until recently our roads were off limits to large through trucks, but the courts struck down these protections, which applied to some trucks and not others. **Route 27**, known as Nassau Street and the Princeton-Kingston Road in Princeton, and **Route 206**, known as State Road, Bayard Lane, Stockton Street, Old Post Road, and Lawrenceville Road, **now appear on the State's truck route maps**. We need your help to get them taken off the New Jersey Access Network.

Background The new rules require that large trucks traveling through New Jersey—that is, double-trailer truck combinations and 102-inch wide trucks, the biggest “standard” trucks now on the road, around 74 feet long—travel mostly on the National Truck Network (interstate network and other truck friendly roads). The rules also require that trucks making deliveries take the most direct route from the National Network to the point of delivery and back. We support these provisions. However, the rules also designate as a secondary network, the New Jersey Access Network, to support the National Network in a new hierarchy of roads open to large trucks. **Trucks will be allowed to continue on the New Jersey Access Network from point of delivery to point of delivery without backtracking to the National Network**. This provision—Section 1.6, “reasonable access to terminals”—is a big loophole.

Overarching considerations

- **Princeton's main roads may become adjuncts to the National Network.** Two sections of the interstate network, I-287 to the north and I-295/95 to the south, are connected by Route 206. Under the proposed rule, any large truck making a delivery anywhere on the entire length of Route 206 (for example, to a shipping facility in Hillsborough) will be allowed to continue without backtracking for the entire length of Route 206 to Route 27 or on to I-295. Because of poor enforcement (State police say it is unsafe to pull trucks over on our two-lane roads without shoulders), it will be difficult to stop through truckers gambling on a free ride between interstates.
- **Overlapping adverse impacts from increased truck traffic on Routes 206 and 27 mean enormous costs to Princeton.** Each adverse impact is aggravated by other negative impacts. Air and noise pollution undermine the tax base, for example, and discourage businesses and individuals from locating here. When heavy trucks are rolling down Nassau Street, tourists flee, which causes hardship to merchants, which further undermines the tax base.

What you can do The trucking industry has signed off on these rules. Princeton must challenge them. PLEASE WRITE THE PEOPLE LISTED BELOW. **Ask the State to exclude Princeton's main roads (Routes 206 and 27) from the New Jersey Access Network**. If you are short of time, just write one sentence. Comments on the rules must arrive by February 16, 2007, and the State will evaluate the **number** of comments as one factor in deciding whether to exclude trucks. If the exclusion *is* granted, large trucks would be allowed to come to Princeton only when taking the shortest distance to/ from a delivery.

MATERIAL YOU CAN USE IN YOUR LETTER:

Main arguments: **1) Alternate routes exist.** Large trucks traveling between I-287 and I-295/95 can travel on Route 1. They can also travel down the New Jersey Turnpike. Princeton does not advocate shifting heavy truck traffic to any area roads not on the National Truck Network or, like Route 1, constructed to accommodate them. **2) Leaving Princeton's main roads on the New Jersey Access Network will undermine public safety, sap the economy, and destroy quality of life in one of New Jersey's most attractive towns.**

Safety issues:

- Routes 27 and 206 in Princeton are not typical state highways. They are the town's main streets—**two-lane roadways that lack shoulders for trucks to use to stop safely in an emergency.**
- Princeton is a **dense residential community.** People walk beside these main roads—and sometimes *on* them in places without sidewalks. Roads packed with large trucks are **barriers** to community cohesiveness, dividing neighborhoods, pushing people into cars for short trips.
- **Drivers of large trucks have difficulty seeing pedestrians.** Princeton Borough has **more people who commute to work on foot** than any other town in New Jersey.
- Since **Route 206 has no shoulders and Route 27 is lined with parked cars, bicycles on these roads cannot get out of the way of big trucks—a** dangerous situation in case of a fall.
- At the intersection of Routes 206 and 27, the **turning radius of large trucks is greater than space permits.** Big trucks must cross into opposing or adjacent lanes when turning at this spot.
- The **road geometry denies truckers safe sight distances.** Example: the high-accident intersection at Ewing and Route 206. Any hill or curve coupled with a hidden driveway spells trouble. Route 206 has more than 180 driveways and uncontrolled access points in Princeton.
- In their worst sections, Routes 27 and 206 have **higher accident rates** than the worst sections of many roads excluded from the New Jersey Access Network.
- Lawrenceville police, who have stopped trucks for other infractions, have found so many **safety violations** in some trucks that they have had to pull them off the road. National statistics show that 1 in 4 trucks have badly adjusted brakes; poorly adjusted brakes mean stopping distances go up.
- **Less well-maintained trucks are often the very vehicles avoiding Turnpike tolls.**

Economic and environmental issues

- Truck traffic on Princeton **increases air pollution.** Diesel trucks currently emit more than twice as much nitrogen oxide & 10 to 100 times as much particulate matter as cars.
- **Noise pollution** from even well-maintained trucks may cause irritation, stress, and sleep interference. Hills, such as those on Route 206, contribute to noise because of gear changes, acceleration, and loud engine braking or “Jake braking” in trucks with poorly maintained mufflers.
- **Princeton is an important tourist destination.** Many attractions are located close to Princeton's main roads. Tourists, who are notoriously fickle, will stop coming if conditions are unpleasant.

- **Princeton University**, which attracts more than 550,000 visitors annually for various events, is located close to Princeton's main roads. The economic value of these visits is substantial.
- **Economic activity in the center of town is hurt** if customers cannot shop or stroll without being assaulted by the fumes and noise of large trucks.
- Trucks have a **negative impact on property values** around Routes 206 and 27. Lower property values eventually mean lower tax revenues for Princeton and fewer services.
- **Degradations to Princeton's historic fabric occur if its main roads carry trucks other than those making nearby deliveries.** The King's Highway is designated an historic road; many districts near the roads are historic.
- A **rare stone-arch bridge from the late 18th century** carries all the heavy traffic on Route 206. In 1999 Preservation New Jersey put the Stony Brook Bridge on its list of endangered historic sites.

Additional issues

- Keeping these roads on the Network undermines **State initiatives to improve conditions on 206 and 27**, including lowered speed limits and plans to improve pedestrian safety and tame traffic.
- **Costly infrastructure effects:** Route 206 is asphalt on concrete slab. Heavy vehicles rock the slabs as they pass, breaking the road surface from below. Result: regular and costly repaving.
- **Truck traffic and truck size is steadily increasing.** Princeton's main roads are ill suited to the volume and size of today's trucks. A standard sized truck grew from 10' tractors with 25' trailers in 1946 to 17' tractors with 53' trailers today. Increased size is a real threat to safety: as weights rise from 65 to 80 tons (today's standard), the risk of an accident involving fatality goes up 50 percent.

Use the arguments and information in this flyer to write letters or e-mails or to make phone calls.

PEOPLE TO CONTACT

To count—and numbers will count—your comments on the rules must be in writing.

Mark your letter re: N.J.A.C. 16:32, Truck Access, and send your comments (to arrive by Feb. 16) to:

- o **Miriam Crum; Administrative Practice Officer; New Jersey Department of Transportation; Bureau of Administrative Practice and Public Law Implementation; P.O. Box 600; Trenton, NJ 08625; FAX: 609-530-3841**

Once you've sent your letter to Miriam Crum, you can copy everyone else on this list by mail or email or contact them by phone to leave your opinions.

- o **Commissioner Kris Kolluri; New Jersey Department of Transportation; P.O. Box 600;**

Trenton, NJ 08625-0600; 609-530-3536; FAX: 609-530-3841;

kris.kolluri@dot.state.nj.us

When emailing Commissioner Kolluri, also cc his secretary:

stacy.brugno@dot.state.nj.us

- o **Governor Jon S. Corzine; Office of the Governor; PO Box 001; Trenton, NJ 08625-0001; 609-292-6000. You can email Governor Corzine by**

going to: www.nj.gov/governor/govmail.html

- o **Senator Shirley Turner; 1440 Pennington Road, first floor; Ewing, NJ 08618; 609-530-3277; senturner@njleg.org**

- o Assemblyman Reed Gusciora; 226 West State Street; Trenton, NJ 08608; 609-292-0500; asmgusciora@njleg.org
- o Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson-Coleman; 226 West State Street; Trenton, NJ 08608; 609-292-0500; aswwatsoncoleman@njleg.org
- o Congressman Rush Holt; 50 Washington Rd; West Windsor, NJ 08550; 609-750-9365; 609-750-0618 (fax); 1-87-RUSH-HOLT (toll-free); E-mail Congressman Holt by going to his website: www.holt.house.gov/contact.shtml
- o Also, please send a copy to: Citizens for a Safer Route 206; PO Box 1388; Princeton, NJ 08542-1388; rte206@yahoo.com so Princeton can gauge how many comments have gone in.