

May-03-07 Acting Governor Signs Legislation Expanding Region's Air Traffic Capacity

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ACTING GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION

EXPANDING REGION'S AIR TRAFFIC CAPACITY

TRENTON – Acting Governor Richard J. Codey today signed legislation allowing the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to designate one airport in each state for expansion. The bill mirrors legislation passed in New York and will allow the Port Authority to purchase the lease of Stewart Airport, which will then be expanded in an effort to ease the burden of excessive air traffic on the region's airports.

"This legislation is vital to the economic future of our state and region," Acting Governor Codey said. "Expanding our capacity to handle air traffic will reduce the tremendous strain placed on our airports and will ensure that they can continue to serve as drivers of economic growth in the future."

"This bill will help residents and businesses near Newark and Teterboro Airports who have dealt for far too long with the noise and the air traffic congestion," said Senator Sarlo (D-Bergen, Essex and Passaic), who sponsored the bill in the Senate. "When the Port Authority gets through fixing up Stewart, it will draw air traffic and cargo flights from the northern areas which now have no viable alternatives to the metropolitan airports in and around New York City."

"Today marks the beginning of the end of air traffic overcrowding and jet noise here at Teterboro," said Assemblyman Fred Scalera (D-Essex), an Assembly sponsor. "This takeover brings concrete safety, quality of life, and economic improvements to New Jersey that will benefit residents, travelers, and the rest of our region for years to come."

The legislation authorizes the Port Authority to select two sites outside of the authority's current jurisdiction for expansion and gives each governor the authority to approve that selection in their respective state.

In New York, the Port Authority board has authorized the purchase of the lease for Stewart Airport, which is located in Newburgh, New York. The authority plans to expand the airport's capacity with the goal of reducing congestion in the airspace surrounding the region's three major airports. The expansion would have a similar impact on the region's smaller airports as well.

No site in New Jersey has been designated for expansion at this point.

The legislation, S-25/A-3948, was sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblymembers Gordon (D-Bergen), Schaer (D-Bergen, Essex and Passaic) and Voss (D-Bergen).

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey operates many of the busiest and most important transportation links in the region. They include John F. Kennedy International, Newark Liberty International, LaGuardia and Teterboro airports; AirTrain JFK and AirTrain Newark; the George Washington Bridge and Bus Station; the Lincoln and Holland tunnels; the three bridges between Staten Island and New Jersey; the PATH (Port Authority Trans-Hudson) rapid-transit system; the Port Authority-Downtown Manhattan Heliport; Port Newark; the Elizabeth-Port Authority Marine Terminal; the Howland Hook Marine Terminal on Staten Island; the Brooklyn Piers/Red Hook Container Terminal; and the Port Authority Bus Terminal in midtown Manhattan. The agency also owns the 16-acre World Trade Center site in Lower Manhattan.