

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

In January, you asked the Legislature to fund the Empire State Trail, arguing that the cost was justified by the benefits of cycle tourism and public health. The Assembly responded favorably by including funding in the 2017-2018 budget.

But while the EST is poised to grow cycling upstate, the current high volume of bike travel between New York City and the Lower-Mid Hudson Valley is threatened by the failure of the Port Authority to widen the paths on the George Washington Bridge.

For this reason, and others, we ask that you call on the Port Authority to widen the George Washington Bridge paths as part of any state program to expand cycling infrastructure.¹

As you know, the PA is undertaking a \$2 billion renovation of the GWB, during which the agency will widen path approaches, but leave the main spans at 7 foot. They further plan to allocate one path to pedestrians and another to cyclists.

But the GWB is already overcrowded at 3700 cyclists per day on weekends and growing at 10.4% per year. At this rate, there'll be 9000 cyclists per day by 2024.

There's no precedent for putting that many cyclists on such a narrow a path. According to national standards, paths for this much use should be 14 foot wide.^{2 3}

Unless the PA widens the paths during the reconstruction, the GWB will cease to function as a cycling facility. That will precipitate a net *decline* in regional cycle tourism, regardless of facilities on the new Tappan Zee and lower sections of the Empire State Trail.⁴

Accordingly, we ask that you prevail upon the Port Authority to upgrade the paths on the George Washington Bridge in order to sustain the rapid growth of bicycling in New York City and the Lower-Mid-Hudson Valley.⁵

Respectfully,

State Senators Marisol Alcántara, Martin Malave Dilan, George Latimer, Jose M. Serrano, Jesse Hamilton; Assemblymembers Carmen De La Rosa, Inez E. Dickens, Deborah Glick, Walter T. Mosley, Francisco P. Moya, Daniel O' Donnell, Dan Quart, Robert J. Rodriguez, Frank Skartardos

cc:

Senate Speaker John J. Flanagan; Senator Richard Funke, Chair, Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks And Recreation; Senator Michael H. Ranzenhofer, Chair, Corporations, Authorities and Commissions; Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie; Assemblymember Daniel J. O'Donnell, Chair, Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development; Assemblymember Didi Barrett, Chair, Regional Tourism

¹ Further justification for widening the GWB paths include enhancements to sustainability, resilience, affordability, competitiveness, local tourism and that principal beneficiaries would include communities who've borne the brunt of bridge congestion, degraded air quality and unsafe streets for generations., *Complete George*, <http://tinyurl.com/zt3pnc9>

² "Capacity and Demand," *Complete George*, <http://tinyurl.com/jpcfphq>

³ "National Standards," *Complete George*, <http://tinyurl.com/gotz6r3>

⁴ "Cycle Tourism," *Complete George*, <http://tinyurl.com/he77pp8>

⁵ Complete George is an ad hoc coalition of 160 organizations, businesses and communities who've called on the Port Authority to widen the paths on the George Washington Bridge during the upcoming reconstruction., "Supporters," *Complete George*, <http://tinyurl.com/j2nbj2>

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