

United States Senate

March 21, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy:

I write today in support of the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and the State of New Jersey, and their efforts to apply for United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Emergency Relief program funding to address sinkholes along Federal-Aid Interstate 80 (I-80) located in Morris County, New Jersey.

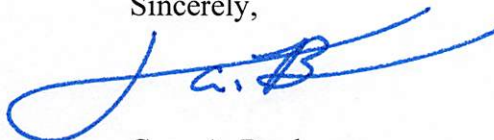
I-80 spans more than 68 miles from the Pennsylvania state line to its eastern terminus in Bergen County, New Jersey. On December 26, 2024, a sinkhole on I-80 opened when an abandoned iron mine shaft collapsed under the highway's eastbound shoulder near Exit 34. This sinkhole closed the eastbound lanes for four days, leading to slow-moving detours and diminishing throughput along a route critical to regional commerce. On February 10, 2025, NJDOT discovered a second sinkhole 75 feet west of the first, leading to another closure and weeks of detours along I-80.

The response to this structural disaster has been a collaborative effort between NJDOT, the New Jersey State Police, and local partners. NJDOT crews began proactive drilling and grouting 24 hours a day along the I-80 eastbound corridor between Exit 34 and the bridge over Route 15 in Wharton, New Jersey to stabilize the roadway and evaluate the subsurface conditions. Once this assessment is complete, NJDOT will be able to finalize a design for repair and calculate a cost estimate.

According to NJDOT, 82 locations were drilled and 57 locations were filled with grout between December 26, 2024 and March 5, 2025. Construction barriers and fencing were installed between the median and I-80 westbound to provide additional safety during the grouting process. New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy then signed an Executive Order on March 8th declaring a State of Emergency to address the damage and qualify for Emergency Relief program funding designated for emergency repairs and permanent repairs on Federal-aid highways and roads.

I thank you in advance for your attention to New Jersey's efforts to restore the structural integrity of this vital highway that will keep drivers of commercial and personal vehicles safe. Should you have any questions, please contact me or my staff at (973) 639-8700.

Sincerely,



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator