



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Money Island Road gets paved as the County pursues a grant for a more permanent solution through the Department of Transportation.

BRIDGETON, New Jersey - Nantuxent Creek, Money Island is a 5.5-mile-long estuary of Delaware Bay in Cumberland County, New Jersey and is home to Cumberland County's most valuable offloading port for oyster harvesting. It rises on the border of Lawrence and Downe Townships, in the marshes to the northwest of Newport, at the convergence of Middle Brook and Pages Run. It forms part of the border between the two townships.

The oyster industry at Money Island is worth more than \$40 million out of New Jersey's \$1 billion fishing industry. Money Island has been significantly impacted by tidal rise and storm damage, causing it to subside and sink into the marsh. The street is the sole access road that services the New Jersey oyster industry on the Delaware Bay.

Cumberland County had been advised that repairs to the road would cost upwards to \$10 million. Cumberland County and Downe Township currently do not have the financial resources to fund the costly but necessary project without assistance from state and federal agencies. As a result, the county reached out to Senator Michael Testa who arranged an onsite inspection of the road with New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Commissioner Gutierrez-Seaccetti, Cumberland County Commission Director Douglas Albrecht, Business Administrator Harold Johnson, Downe Township Mayor Michael Rothman, Commercial Township Mayor Ken Whildin and Steve Fleetwood of Bivalve Packing. The Senator and Commissioner were able to see the infrastructure failure firsthand and speak to the group about the details of the damage to the road and the negative economic impact on the local oyster industry.

"It is good to see the private sector work with local, county and state government to come together to protect a \$40 million industry in the County. The industry relies on this one road to harvest oysters in a timely fashion. In addition, we look forward to the long-term fix of this roadway to address future issues" stated Commissioner Director Douglas Albrecht.

After touring the site, the County was notified that the NJDOT is willing to fund the Concept Development for the proposed Money Island Road project. The County was encouraged to submit a grant application to the Local Transportation Projects Fund through SAGE (System for

Administering Grants Electronically) which they have already started and will keep the public apprised of the outcome.

In the meantime, Cumberland County Department of Public Works was able to pave the road with significantly more asphalt to provide a temporary solution to the road until a more permanent solution can be obtained through the grant process. The roadway was repaved with hot mix asphalt to improve the rideability of the roadway surface and alleviate the water ponding during minor tidal flooding. This will allow the oyster industry to continue to operate with minimal disruption.

For questions or concerns please reach out to Public Works Director Neil Riley via e-mail at neilri@cumberlandcountynj.gov.

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