

New Jersey Society for Environmental, Economic Development State Issues Briefing Book

Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 3
Reports of the NJ SEED Policy Committees	Page 4
Transportation	Page 4
New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund	Page 4
Freight Mobility	Page 5
Safety	Page 5
Energy	Page 6
New Jersey's Energy Deregulation	Page 6
The Arthur Kill-Channel Improvements	Page 6
New Jersey's Petroleum Infrastructure	Page 6
Economic Development	Page 7
The Port of New York and New Jersey: Moving Our Economy and Environment Forward	Page 7
Regional Transportation Linkages	Page 8
Third Passenger Tunnel Into New York	Page 8
Cross-Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel	Page 9
Clean Up and Redevelopment Bond Issue	Page 9
Environmental	Page 10
Brownfields Sites and Natural Resource Damages	Page 10
California Car	Page 11

Other Issues	Page 12
The State Planning Process	Page 12
Improving Education in New Jersey	Page 13
Higher Education	Page 14

Introduction

The New Jersey Society for Environmental, Economic Development (NJ SEED) is proud to present the first State Issues Briefing Book, a companion to our Congressional Briefing Book published each spring. For more than thirty years, we have supported policies that create jobs, bolster our economy and enhance our environment.

Thanks to all of the NJ SEED members who contributed to this document, and a special thank you to our Policy Committee Chairmen and Members:

NJ SEED Economic Development Policy Issues Committee:

John Maddocks, Business Partnership of Somerset County (Co-Chairman)
Stephen Kukan, Advance Realty Group (Co-Chairman)
Tim Comerford, PSE&G
Dick Forman, Associated General Contractors
Bill Healey, Healthcare Institute of New Jersey
Paul Kaywork, Waters and Bugbee
George Laufenberg, NJ Council of Carpenters
Joe McNamara, NJ LECET
Ed Zarnock, Union County Alliance

NJ SEED Environmental Issues Policy Committee:

Dick Dewling, Dewling Associates (Chairman)
Michael Egenton, New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce

NJ SEED Energy Issues Policy Committee:

Art Guida, PSE&G (Co-Chairman)
Jim Benton, NJ Petroleum Council (Co-Chairman)

NJ SEED Transportation Issues Policy Committee:

Stephen Kealy and Roger Ellis, Local 472 (Co-Chairmen)
Richard Forman, Associated General Contractors
Steve Gardner, NJ LECET
Mark Longo, Local 825
Ken McClelland, State Troopers Fraternal Association
Matt McDermott, Nation's Port
Kevin Monaco, Utility & Transportation Contractors Association
Susan Murphy Ostergaard, Port Authority of NY and NJ
Eric Richard, NJ State AFL-CIO
Enid Torok, NJ School Bus Owners Association
Charlie Wowkanech, NJ State AFL-CIO

Reports of the NJ SEED Policy Committees:

TRANSPORTATION

New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund

A solid infrastructure is the key to success in the future. It provides new opportunities for international trade, improves quality of life for people, and fosters successful economies. There is a crucial link between investments in transportation and our state's ability to compete nationally or even globally. No state or nation can thrive without a highly advanced transportation infrastructure to support the many complex activities that characterize modern society. Without continuous investment in its transportation infrastructure, a modern economy fails to grow. Delays in funding needed maintenance and repairs are the most expensive form of under-investment.

There are few other regions in the country where the intermodal mix of highways, bridges, mass transit, airports, and marine facilities are as critical or as prevalent as here in the Northeast. It is fair to say there are no regions where economic and quality of life issues are as intertwined with transportation.

As an important hub to the economically vibrant northeast corridor of states, New Jersey's economy has never been more connected to its transportation system. Businesses have come to rely on New Jersey's road, rail, ports and airports to move goods to market. With freight traffic projected to grow by 70 percent over the next 20 years, analysts project an even greater strain to our transportation system's capacity, a fact that many public officials recognize. But the Garden State moves more than merchandise, it moves people—5.7 million licensed New Jersey drivers travel almost 69 billion miles each year. Whether it is carpooling to work or driving the kids to soccer practice, New Jersey relies on its roads, rails, and bridges.

Outgrowing Our Infrastructure

Some facts that shed light on New Jersey's transportation challenges:

- According to the Federal Highway Administration, only three of the 10,600 miles of major roads in New Jersey are rated as "very good."
- New Jersey's statewide cost of congestion is \$7.3 billion or \$1,255 per licensed driver.
- New Jerseyans face the third-longest commute time in the nation.
- Of the 6,366 bridges in New Jersey, more than one third—2,350 of them—were deemed either structurally deficient or obsolete.
- In 2003, just \$65 million of state grants of municipal aid for transportation improvements were approved. An additional \$118 million went unfunded.
- A significant portion of funds raised for the Transportation Trust Fund is used to pay down an existing debt of \$8 billion for past capital projects.
- The average major road in New Jersey carries 2.3 million vehicles per lane annually.

- NJDOT projects the state will need \$30 billion for transportation over the next 10 years.

Early in 2003, Governor James E. McGreevey issued an executive order creating a commission to study New Jersey's transportation system and its needs. The commission, chaired by Transportation Commissioner Jack Lettiere, will make recommendations regarding transportation funding and priorities as the State prepares to renew the Transportation Trust Fund. The Blue Ribbon Commission's membership includes leaders from business, academia, labor, government, and regional planning organizations. The commission has been meeting regularly and expects to report its findings in late 2003.

The New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund (TTF), which supports improved roads, bridges and mass transit systems, must be refinanced by June 30, 2004, if it is to remain a viable means of financing transportation projects.

Originally established in 1984, TTF has provided more than \$9 billion for transportation projects statewide. Based on Federal Highway Administration estimates this has led to the creation of 378,000 jobs.

NJ SEED supports the creation of a plan that establishes priorities for infrastructure investment and secures a dedicated source of funding for transportation capital improvements.

New Jersey's Port: Freight Mobility

Freight mobility is an absolute priority to the maritime industry operating in the Port of New York and New Jersey, as it is also to the tens of millions of consumers and businesses it serves, as well as our public policy makers. The Marine Transportation System (MTS), the system of waterways, maritime terminals and inland connections that supports the Port, is an often neglected yet critical component of New Jersey's transportation infrastructure. It is imperative that public policy be made to address current intermodal deficiencies, lack of modal balance and diversity such as increased use of rail and waterborne freight movement, and highway system constraints that threaten the efficiency and growth of our international intermodal service connections which currently results in costly congestion, air quality issues and mobility inefficiencies.

NJ SEED believes that the lack of a world-class international intermodal corridor will shut down the significant economic engine fueled by the various port users. These users move the millions of cargo containers to serve all of the port-dependent businesses in our state and region. The state and regional economy, environment and overall quality of life will be adversely affected should we, as a state, fail to improve our transportation infrastructure.

NJ SEED supports initiatives that will expand and enrich the intermodal infrastructure.

***For Port Economic Issues, please see the Economic Development Section.**

Safety

New Jersey's State Police continue to work with the local police to protect New Jersey citizens on the State's highways.

NJ SEED supports the increase of State Troopers assigned to roadside construction projects.

NJ SEED supports increased funding for State Trooper vehicles and equipment such as communication devices.

ENERGY

NJ SEED acknowledges that there is no quick fix for the energy challenges facing New Jersey today. However, it has been long understood that policies need to be debated and adopted that significantly reduce our dependence on potentially unreliable foreign sources of oil and gas.

New Jersey's Energy Deregulation

Price caps and shopping credits issued as a result of New Jersey's deregulation of energy production have ended. As a result of rate caps being completely removed, energy costs for consumers may fluctuate over the next season. The potential for volatile price spikes is greater now that market forces are in full effect.

NJ SEED recommends that state government make only the most necessary changes for at least one year and give the energy pricing market an opportunity to adjust with the marketplace.

NJ SEED further recommends that state government continue and expand efforts to offer appropriate incentives for energy companies to maintain and upgrade the current electricity transportation and distribution infrastructure.

The Arthur Kill-Channel Improvements

The Arthur Kill waterway is crucial to the petroleum supply line into New Jersey as well as the entire northeast region. Without this waterway, New Jersey remains at higher risk from terrorist impact.

NJSEED supports initiatives that will lower the depth of the Arthur Kill waterway.

New Jersey's Petroleum Infrastructure

New Jersey is home to one of the nation's most comprehensive strategic marketplaces for petroleum product supply.

Profile of New Jersey's petroleum infrastructure

- New Jersey is the home to one of four EIA North East heating oil reserve sites.
- New Jersey is one of five states to require reformulated gasoline.
- New Jersey has a major pipeline and six oil refineries.

- 67% of New Jersey homes are heated by natural gas.
- New Jersey has the fourth-lowest gas tax in the nation (32.9 as of 7/03), and is surrounded by very high-priced states (New York, Connecticut and Delaware).

NJ SEED supports investments in our infrastructure that provide a solid base for our economic future and an improved environment..

Economic Development

The Port of New York and New Jersey: Moving Our Economy and Environment Forward

Supplying virtually all of the products necessary to support the state's manufacturing, business, wholesale and retail markets, from raw materials to finished products including automobiles, petroleum, cell phones, computers and electronics, food, spirits, coffee, clothing, Belgium block for our homes, and salt for our roadways, the maritime industry operating in the Port of New York and New Jersey provides our state, region and nation with an abundance of significant economic, environmental and quality-of-life benefits.

That is why Nation's Port and its members are so dedicated to the continued development of the Port. Nation's Port is the bi-state coalition of business, labor, government agencies and community leaders advocating for the strategic investment and sustainable development of the Port in concert with the environmental preservation of the harbor's natural resources.

Currently, more than 80 million consumers -- almost 35 percent of the entire US population - - are served by our port. To remain the premiere port of choice and the most attractive gateway for international trade, a commitment must be made for public policy and funding support of both waterside and landside infrastructure investments.

On the waterside, the increased demand for cargo is being met by the use of larger vessels. The ocean-going container ships calling on our port have grown from 2,500-container ships in 1990 to 6,000-container mega-ships today, and they are only getting larger. Without the environmentally friendly and cost-effective ocean movement of goods (which represents 95% by weight and 75% by value of all overseas trade) the alternative would be thousands of additional trucks on the roadways for each vessel that did not call on our port, creating additional congestion, motor vehicle exhaust emissions and diminished air quality. To accommodate this growth, the \$2 billion channel navigation improvement project to deepen the New York harbor to 50 feet by 2014 has commenced. It is the largest channel navigation project in the nation and is critical to the sustained growth of our port.

Complimenting the channel navigation deepening and port infrastructure improvements is the industry's investment in environmentally sound alternatives to truck-based container movement, such as short sea shipping initiatives featuring feeder barge services from our port to inland destinations both north and south. In addition, initiatives to increase rail movement of containers, both long-haul and short shuttle runs, must be a public policy priority. ExpressRail, the on-dock rail terminal at the Elizabeth Marine Terminal, set a record in 2003 for container lifts, with 228,551 lifts, a 13.8 % increase. With the current expansion, it will handle one million lifts within five years. A greater reliance on rail

movement of cargo around the port and through our state makes great economic and environmental sense.

However, landside intermodal infrastructure improvements that promote modal balance and diversity and solve highway congestion must also keep pace to accommodate the significant growth in cargo that will arrive here annually. Cargo volumes are growing, and the pressure to increase terminal efficiency and throughput will place a great burden on the ability to move cargo from dock to final destination. Transportation infrastructure investments must be priority projects to ensure continued freight mobility without imposing additional strain on local communities and roadways.

The Port is home to one of New Jersey's most important, yet overlooked, industries. It is a phenomenal economic engine, supporting 413,000 jobs nationally, 229,000 jobs regionally and 137,500 New Jersey-based jobs. It contributes almost \$1.5 billion annually in tax revenue to the state of New Jersey and its municipalities. Serving as the nation's third largest port, the largest on the East Coast and the 14th largest in the world, our port handled 3.7 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) of containerized cargo in 2002. The industry created 1,153 new jobs last year as containerized cargo volume grew 13%, accounting for almost 60% of the containerized cargo handled by all North Atlantic ports, and 13.5% of all US Ports in 2002. In addition to containerized cargo, we are the country's largest auto port, handling more than 588,000 automobiles in 2002, and its largest refined petroleum products hub. Overall, 5,000 vessels moved more than 600,000 cruise ship passengers and almost \$90 billion worth of cargo through our port last year. Through the first eight months of this year, cargo volumes have already surpassed last year's record levels. This growth will continue with cargo volumes expected to double by 2010 and quadruple by 2040 as population and consumer demand increase.

The lack of a world-class international intermodal corridor will shut down the significant economic engine fueled by the various port users who move the millions of cargo containers to serve all of the 80 million consumers and port-dependent businesses in our state and region. New Jersey's economy, environment and overall quality of life will be adversely affected if we, as a state, fail to improve our transportation infrastructure. With the continued leadership of the McGreevey administration and the Legislature, we will ensure the continued success of our nation's port.

Regional Transportation Linkages

Northern New Jersey's economic viability is linked to the efficiency of the area's transportation infrastructure. As traffic volume between New Jersey and New York City continues to increase and commerce from our ports grows, it is critical to the economic future of this region that our transportation linkages are expanded to accommodate this need.

Third Passenger Tunnel into New York

Governor McGreevey has committed five million dollars for a draft economic impact study on a third rail passenger tunnel between New Jersey and New York City. This tunnel will immediately better the quality of life for residents of Northern New Jersey. The traffic relief that this tunnel offers would decrease congestion and, thereby, decrease pollution. This investment in our transportation infrastructure will drive the economies of the region and lessen the environmental impact of traffic.

Cross-Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel

New Jersey and New York Ports continue to experience increased traffic and process a larger volume of containers every year. Once off loaded, a ship's cargo needs to be able to move with the same efficiency and ease that it experienced when it was transported in. A cross-harbor rail freight tunnel would increase the flow of products into market while decreasing road and bridge congestion. New York is the only major port city in the United States that has never built a rail freight connection across its harbor or river. Most products entering or passing through the Port on rail are either detoured 280 miles to a bridge in Selkirk or loaded onto trucks and transported over the roads. The impact on New Jersey's roads and traffic congestion is stifling to our transportation infrastructure and economy. The tunnel would remove at least one million tractor-trailer trucks per year from our roads, and would result in cleaner air, reduced congestion, lower-cost consumer goods and a generally reduced cost of doing business.

NJ SEED will continue to monitor possible tunnel expansion and supports these investments in our regional transportation linkages.

Clean Up and Redevelopment Bond Issue: A Clean and Green New Jersey

NJ SEED supports streamlined procedures and financial incentives to clean up and redevelop abandoned and contaminated sites, thereby encouraging revitalization of distressed properties. This will take many forms in the way of new jobs, new housing, new job centers and new tax ratables for New Jersey's municipalities.

On November 4th, New Jersey voters will have the opportunity to provide critical funding for economic development and environmental cleanup across the state. Public Question #2 on the ballot is a proposed constitutional amendment to create a stable and permanent source of funding for the cleanup and redevelopment of New Jersey's abandoned or marginally productive contaminated sites.

If passed, Question #2 will allow funds from an existing fund, the Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program, to be used for economic development and environmental clean-up costs. The current law authorizes a revenue stream from the corporate business tax to be directed to the UST program. There is now excess money in this fund, which can be used for other projects. Over \$80 million has accumulated for the UST program, and with the passage of the proposed constitutional amendment, half of these funds can be used for other pressing clean up programs. The revenue anticipated for non-UST purposes from the corporate business tax through 2004 is estimated to be an additional \$25 million.

The proposal on the ballot will provide an expanded use of the existing UST program funds. There is no additional cost to the State, no additional taxes are needed to implement the program and the payoff is significant. In addition to preserving open space, protecting the environment and revitalizing neighborhoods, brownfields redevelopment boosts local tax revenues, creates jobs and improves quality of life for New Jerseyans.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has identified over 12,000 known contaminated sites in this state and broad-based support for Question #2 is growing. Governor James E. McGreevey, DEP Commissioner Bradley Campbell and Department of

Community Affairs Commissioner Susan Bass Levin all support this referendum, as does virtually the entire New Jersey Legislature. Additional supporters include a “Clean & Green Coalition,” which was created to help ensure public awareness of the need for brownfields funding throughout New Jersey. Coalition members include businesses, associations, environmental groups and labor unions.

Opportunities for successful brownfields clean-up projects are evident throughout the state. The New Jersey DEP has identified over 12,000 known contaminated sites in the state. The following examples show that through funding and support, a clean and green New Jersey is much closer to reality.

- Camden: Along the waterfront, the long-abandoned and decaying 550,000-square foot RCA Nipper Building is being transformed into a residential development featuring more than 300 luxury apartments. Parks, ball fields and riverfront promenades will be built on adjacent land that was once contaminated and abandoned.
- Sayreville: On what was once the site of a paint pigment factory, a 427-acre industrial site may well become the home to a sports complex, indoor arena, hotel, ferry, marina and retail complex.
- Pemberton: An old gas station has been cleaned up and given a new life, providing residents with a much-needed service.

NJ SEED urges support for this important ballot question.

Environmental

Brownfields Sites and Natural Resource Damages Claims

The redevelopment of “brownfields” sites in New Jersey is an important environmental, economic, and jobs development issue. Brownfields are defined as under-utilized and/or abandoned properties that have either real or perceived environmental challenges. These sites are typically located in older industrialized areas of the State, often recognized under the New Jersey Development and Redevelopment Plan as Regional or Town Centers. Quite frequently these geographic areas of the State have not benefited from the level of economic expansion that has occurred in the more suburban areas of the State. Placing additional financial burdens on the redevelopment of brownfields properties, by way of imposing Natural Resource Damage (NRD) claims, will hinder the future redevelopment of our State’s urban areas.

Although New Jersey has been innovative in the creation and implementation of programs to address and assist in the clean up of brownfields properties, NJ SEED is concerned about recent actions at the State level with respect to Natural Resource Damages. On September 24, 2003 the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection issued a “large scale directive to address more than 4,000 potential claims for natural resource damages statewide.”

In addition to placing specific requirements on property owners, New Jersey’s Department of Environmental Protection River Directive specifically calls for “responsible parties to initiate

an interim restoration of natural resources, focusing on the ecological and economic services that the river provided prior to being injured.” The Passaic River Directive further defines ecological and economic services of the river as “recreational and commercial fishing, wetlands, sediment functions and services, boat access points and increased costs to commerce and the maritime industry due to dredging of contaminated sediments.”

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Passaic River Directive seeks natural resource damage assessments above and beyond any previously authorized, permitted, approved, and/or completed environmental clean-up.

NJ SEED believes that this directive will have an adverse impact on the future mitigation of public health concerns and the creation of redevelopment opportunities for the following reasons:

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection intends to seek Natural Resource Damages compensation above and beyond previously authorized, and in some cases completed, environmental clean up. Thus, a company or individual may have performed environmental remediation consistent with existing rules, regulations, and agreements, yet they may be further liable for monetary damages for Natural Resource Damages.

The clean up of environmentally challenged properties is beneficial to New Jersey's citizens both environmentally and economically. Adding an unknown financial liability to an already complex and financially taxing environmental clean-up process has the potential to reduce the overall number of properties being remediated on a voluntary basis.

With fewer properties undergoing environmental remediation, New Jersey's older industrialized areas will be adversely impacted in their ability to realize economic expansion through the redevelopment of brownfields properties.

New Jersey will be at a competitive disadvantage with other states, as no others are currently seeking Natural Resource Damage claims in such a widespread manner.

New Jersey's credibility with future redevelopers may be in jeopardy, because the potential for seeking Natural Resource Damage claims can apply to businesses and/or individuals that have already completed clean up of a property. If Natural Resource Damage claims are sought after the State has issued a “No Further Action” letter, these claims amount to an additional penalty.

NJ SEED encourages New Jersey's Legislature to seriously consider the potential negative environmental and economic impacts of Natural Resource Damages assessments, and to mitigate these impacts through appropriate legislative initiatives, including forgiveness and assessment limitations.

California Car

Advocates of the California Car legislation, or the Clean Cars Act ([S-2351](#) and [A-2439/3393](#)), claim that implementing this legislation will protect state residents from unhealthy air pollution, but the reality is that it will cost business a bundle without improving the air.

There are no improved emissions under the California program. The proposal would enact California's strict clean-car regulations here in New Jersey. Those emissions standards are not much different from the federal standards New Jersey is already following. In fact, several reports have concluded that there is no significant air improvement under the California program. These include the 2002 New Jersey Clean Air Council Report, the 1993 New Jersey Institute of Technology Report on the California Car, and the New Jersey Office of Legislative Service memorandum on Low Emission Vehicles.

With no air benefit, why are proponents pushing the program? Under the California rules, automakers would be required to sell Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV) with the latest anti-pollution technology beginning in 2006. The bill mandates that 2 percent of all annual New Jersey auto dealer sales must include ZEV – a number that will eventually increase to 10 percent. Automakers and dealers rightly fear that they will be forced to produce and sell cars for which there is no market.

The only ZEVs around have little appeal because they are electric cars costing \$20,000 more than gasoline vehicles. Also, the range is only 75 to 100 miles on a four-to-six hour charge.

Who will be mandated to purchase these cars? The primary target of course is state government and the business community, and the cost will be extraordinary. Recharging stations alone for the ZEV mandate would cost \$200,000 a piece, excluding the cost of the property. Additionally there is the cost to purchase ZEV vehicles.

Supporters of the legislation have attracted media attention by arguing that a majority of legislators support this, which is not the case. The legislation has not passed either house and awaits consideration by the Appropriations Committee, because many legislators want to know what the costs will be. In total, the conservative estimate is over \$6 million in costs to New Jersey government alone—all for no real benefit.

New Jersey loses control. Under the program, all future changes California makes to its program must be adopted here. This would require the NJ DEP to hire staff to track the changes and draft regulations. Since 1990, the California program has changed 49 times.

NJ SEED supports clean air initiatives, but costs and benefits must be included in every policy decision. In the case of the California Car legislation, the cost and benefits just don't add up.

Other Issues

The State Planning Process

The State Planning Commission (SPC) has endorsed a cross acceptance process that includes the distribution of data and the State Plan Map to counties and municipalities prior to initiation of the formal cross acceptance process. The counties and municipalities will be asked to submit comments “relative to growth and preservation areas,” as well as for any other relevant changes to the State Plan.

The Departments of Environmental Protection, Transportation and Agriculture are to submit new data layers, as is any other interested state agency. There has also been some very limited discussion about the inclusion of a data layer for population, employment and

housing. This has never been described in any level of detail, although apparently some additional information was provided to the county planners at a meeting describing the cross acceptance process.

Since the State Planning Commission has stated that this cross acceptance process is to concentrate on implementation of the State Plan, it is, of course, imperative that these population, employment and housing projections be disaggregated so that cross acceptance delivers a State Plan that identifies specific areas to accommodate the projected growth in the desired compact growth patterns desired under the State Plan. This would include the designation of centers and areas zoned at densities and land uses to accommodate growth.

Unfortunately, the opportunity to provide housing and work places for the state's growing population has received little more than cursory attention.

It is imperative that, as a part of the initial bottom-up prelude to formal cross acceptance, there be a local assessment of where and how people will "fit" under the compact development patterns of the State Plan. If the resulting comments show that people won't fit under the proposed distribution or if municipalities reject the required growth patterns, it will be incumbent upon the SPC to revise the preliminary State Plan to accommodate the people, jobs and homes in different patterns and areas for evaluation under the formal cross acceptance process.

NJ SEED believes that any further round of cross acceptance must address the specific requirements (zoning changes, regulatory changes, and funding), that are necessary to implement the State Plan. It is time for the State to show everyone the tools and resources that will answer critical questions about where people will live and work.

Improving Education in New Jersey

Experience and research have proven that three fundamental approaches to school reform can have a lasting and positive impact on student achievement. Most important is the issue of small classes. It is important for teachers to know their students individually. Smaller classes make it easier to give students the individual attention they need and deserve. This helps students grow academically and emotionally.

Research shows that students who attend smaller classes in the early grades out-perform those in larger classes – and their advantage continues through high school. Research also shows that students in smaller classes have better attendance, lower dropout rates, and better behavior. They are also more likely to pursue a college education.

There is also a direct link between family involvement and student achievement. One analysis of national test results found that three factors over which families have direct control – student attendance, the variety of reading materials in the home, and the amount of TV children watch – accounted for a large part of the differences in test scores. All parents want their children to succeed, and schools want to work with families in that effort. Parental involvement and interest is critical to students' success in school. Whether it is help with homework or making sure free time at home is used productively, teacher-parent cooperation can be a winning combination for our kids.

Professional development and mentoring for new teachers are proven ways to boost

students' academic performances and retain teachers in the profession. It is a sad fact that more than a third of all new teachers leave the profession within the first five years. The figure is even higher in urban districts. The good news is that strong support programs, including high-quality mentoring and continuing education, can cut the attrition rate sharply.

Unlike other professions, teaching traditionally doesn't have time built into the regular work schedule for professional development. Teachers must be given adequate opportunities to grow as professionals if they are to meet the ever-increasing demands being placed on them. Continuing education for experienced staff and teachers and mentoring for new ones are important to the future of our children.

NJ SEED supports smaller class sizes, greater family involvement, as well as higher quality mentoring and continuing education for teachers who have a proven track record of improving students' academic growth and development, the real goal of school reform.

Higher Education

Our State has the highest net emigration of college students to other states—more than 20,000 annually.

The children of the “baby boom echo” are now poised to enter their years of higher education. As other states do, it is vital that New Jersey have the capacity to absorb these students. This dramatic wave of college-age students will continue virtually unabated through the next 10 years or more.

A number of New Jersey's key industries, such as pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, biotech, medical technology, finance, publishing, tourism and others, will depend on a highly educated workforce. Over the past generation, State support for higher education has significantly decreased as a portion of the budgets of the State College System. It is vital that this education opportunity be kept within the reach of middle class New Jerseyans.

NJ SEED supports governmental initiatives that will increase the capacity of public higher education in New Jersey.

NJ SEED also supports a fledgling effort to support a higher education bond in 2004.

NJ SEED appreciates the work of its Policy Committees and members who have provided the statements that appear in this Briefing Book. The Officers, Board of Trustees and members of NJ SEED will continue to work with members of the Legislature and the Administration to achieve our State issues goals.