

P. MICHAEL STURLA, CHAIRMAN
414 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
P.O. BOX 202096
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2096
(717) 787-3555
FAX: (717) 705-1923



HOUSE DEMOCRATIC POLICY COMMITTEE

WEBSITE: www.pahouse.com/policycommittee
EMAIL: policy@pahouse.net
@PADemPolicy

House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE DEMOCRATIC POLICY COMMITTEE HEARING

Topic: Transportation

Dunmore Community Center – Dunmore, PA

February 27, 2019

AGENDA

- 2:00 p.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks
- 2:10 p.m. Richard Roman
Bureau Director for Maintenance and Operations/Interim District 4 Executive
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
- 2:40 p.m. Panel from Lackawanna/Luzerne Metropolitan Planning Organization:
- John Pocius, Member of Coordinating Committee
 - Steve Pitoniak, Chairman of Technical Committee
- 3:10 p.m. Panel from Local Transportation Systems:
- Bob Fiume, Executive Director, County of Lackawanna Transit System
 - Carl Beardsley, Executive Director, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport
 - Charlene Wagner Doyle, Director of Administration, Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority
- 3:50 p.m. Panel from Local Unions:
- Thomas Calpin, Business Agent, Ironworkers Local 404
 - Dave Horn, Business Development Representative, Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust Fund
- 4:20 p.m. Closing Remarks

Testimony on Transportation Issues in Northeast Pennsylvania

Rich Roman

Acting Executive, Engineering District 4

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

House Democratic Policy Committee Hearing

February 27, 2019



pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Good afternoon Representative Mullins, committee members, and staff. I am Rich Roman and I am the Director for PennDOT's Bureau of Maintenance and Operations and I am currently serving as the Acting Executive for PennDOT's Engineering District 4 (District 4). Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you and discuss transportation issues across Pennsylvania and how they relate to District 4.

PennDOT is broken up into 11 Engineering districts. Northeast Pennsylvania is served by District 4 which is comprised of six counties: Lackawanna, Luzerne, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming. We are responsible for 3,935 miles of state highways, or 7,945 lane miles, more than 2,000 bridges, and 185 miles of interstate - more interstate miles than any other district in the state.

Seven years ago, my predecessor, George Roberts testified before this very committee and warned that the Commonwealth was operating on a \$3.5 billion gap between identified transportation infrastructure needs and the current funding allocation. In a 2011 report by the Transportation Funding Advisory Commission, transportation infrastructure needs in 2010 were \$8.3 billion. While \$8.3 billion was needed to properly maintain and address our transportation network, only \$4.8 billion was being invested in transportation. In 2019 that problem has only grown.

The Transportation Funding Advisory Commission reports that current funding needs have increased from \$8.3 billion to \$11.5 billion, a 38.5% increase since 2010. The increase is due to increased construction costs and the continued deterioration of our network as a result of inadequate funding. With current federal and state funding at \$8.6 billion, our unmet need for 2020 is now projected to be \$7.2 billion, more than twice the \$3.5 billion in unmet need from 10 years prior. District 4's annual funding shortfall is approximately \$98 million per year with regional bridge and pavement needs estimated at \$198 million annually.

Currently Pennsylvania has the second highest number of bridges in poor condition in the nation with nearly 2,900. Our bridges are a critical part of our state transportation system, with most over 50 years old and exceeding their design life. We must continue to invest in our bridge program to address bridges in poor condition and keep more bridges in good condition.

Another area that requires critical resources are our interstates and roadways, but the interstate system is funded at less than 50% of basic cyclic need. Each year approximately \$460 million is allocated to interstates, yet the funding needed to simply conduct cyclic maintenance and get to a state of good repair should be \$1.2 billion, more than double the current allocation. Even more funding is needed to fully address reconstruction needs, modernization, and to make strategic investments to address freight movement needs and capacity issues. Funding for the National Highway system is even more dire. Excluding the Interstate portion, the National Highway System roads are currently funded at \$742 million, but the cost of basic cyclic maintenance is \$2.2 billion, triple our annual investment.

Governor Wolf has recently proposed Restore Pennsylvania, a major infrastructure initiative which will begin to address some of these needs. Restore Pennsylvania will provide funding for local road upgrades, create new flexible funding options for businesses that need

local infrastructure upgrades to enable development projects, and multimodal and large-scale capital projects for transit. This new initiative will also accelerate progress of projects to resurface, repave, and repair four-digit roads and provide technical assistance and funding for dirt and gravel roads throughout the state. It will create a flexible funding tool to enable capacity upgrades needed to support development where Transportation Infrastructure Investment Funds are not available. Restore Pennsylvania is an important first step in addressing the Commonwealth's infrastructure needs.

District 4, like all the other districts across the state, has a backlog of bridge and road maintenance projects to be completed upon the appropriation of additional funding. PennDOT understands that the economic vitality of Northeast Pennsylvania depends on a safe and efficient transportation system. At the current appropriations, we must balance funding realities with the Commonwealth's transportation needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to present on Pennsylvania and District 4's transportation issues. I welcome any questions the committee has for me at this time.

Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority
280 Cliff Street
Scranton, Pennsylvania 18503

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Charlene W. Doyle, Director of Administration

570-963-6676

cdoyle@pnrra.org

pnrra.org

February 27, 2019

FACT SHEET
PENNSYLVANIA NORTHEAST REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY
ECONOMIC GROWTH IN NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
FEBRUARY 2019

1. The Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority has preserved almost 100 miles of northeastern Pennsylvania rail trackage that the private sector railroads were abandoning and liquidating in the early 1980's thereby preserving these valuable transportation corridors from elimination and turned them into even more valuable industrial development corridors on which new industries and thousands of jobs have been created in Lackawanna and Monroe Counties.
2. The Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad Co., Inc. (DL), PNRRA's designated rail common carrier, was incorporated and is headquartered in Scranton, PA and employs over 35 people in Scranton. The DL provides guaranteed rail freight service to over 20 shippers and receivers in Northeastern Pennsylvania with thousands of well paying, family sustaining jobs created.
3. The preservation of these tracks also permits Steamtown, the Lackawanna County Trolley, the Erie Lackawanna Dining Car Society (ELDCPS), and others to offer passenger service excursions which is a major benefit to northeastern Pennsylvania's growing tourism and recreation industry. Examples of these excursions include the NEPA Valley Wine Train between Carbondale and Scranton; the ELDCPS's dinner trains between Scranton and the Delaware Water Gap; the Lackawanna County Trolley to the Stadium; Steamtown passenger excursions to Carbondale, Archbald, Jessup, Olyphant, Dickson City, Moscow, Gouldsboro, Tobyhanna, East Stroudsburg and the Delaware Water Gap. These excursions also include the extremely popular Christmas in a Small Town Santa Trains between Carbondale and Scranton, among many others. The ELDCPS dinner trains feature the exact same dinners that ran for many years through Scranton on the Phoebe Snow and this organization has plans to partner with many of our hotels between Scranton and the Delaware Water Gap to offer an extremely unique "dinner in the diner" fine cuisine dinner experience which will be of great benefit to our hotel industry by providing a very unique asset to their marketing efforts in growing our hotel and tourism industry in NEPA.
4. Over \$33 million in federal and state discretionary grants have been awarded to Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority and its private designated rail operator in Lackawanna and Monroe Counties with over 2,000 jobs created.
5. One of the most accurate indicia of success of a railroad operation is the revenue carloads of freight handled. Our operation has grown from a low of 393 carloads in 1985 to a high of 9453 in 2018. On the heels of a record breaking year in 2018, the DL experienced another record breaker – 1244 were handled in January 2019, an all-time monthly record.
6. The Scranton to Delaware Water Gap mainline of the Rail Authority also provides the backbone of the project to restore commuter passenger rail service between Scranton and New York City. This project is already underway and under construction in New Jersey with the \$62 million grant to relay the first 7 miles of formerly abandoned track to Andover, New Jersey. This project has been described by many as the greatest economic development project in NEPA history because of the jobs and business that develops along these modern rail commuter corridors.

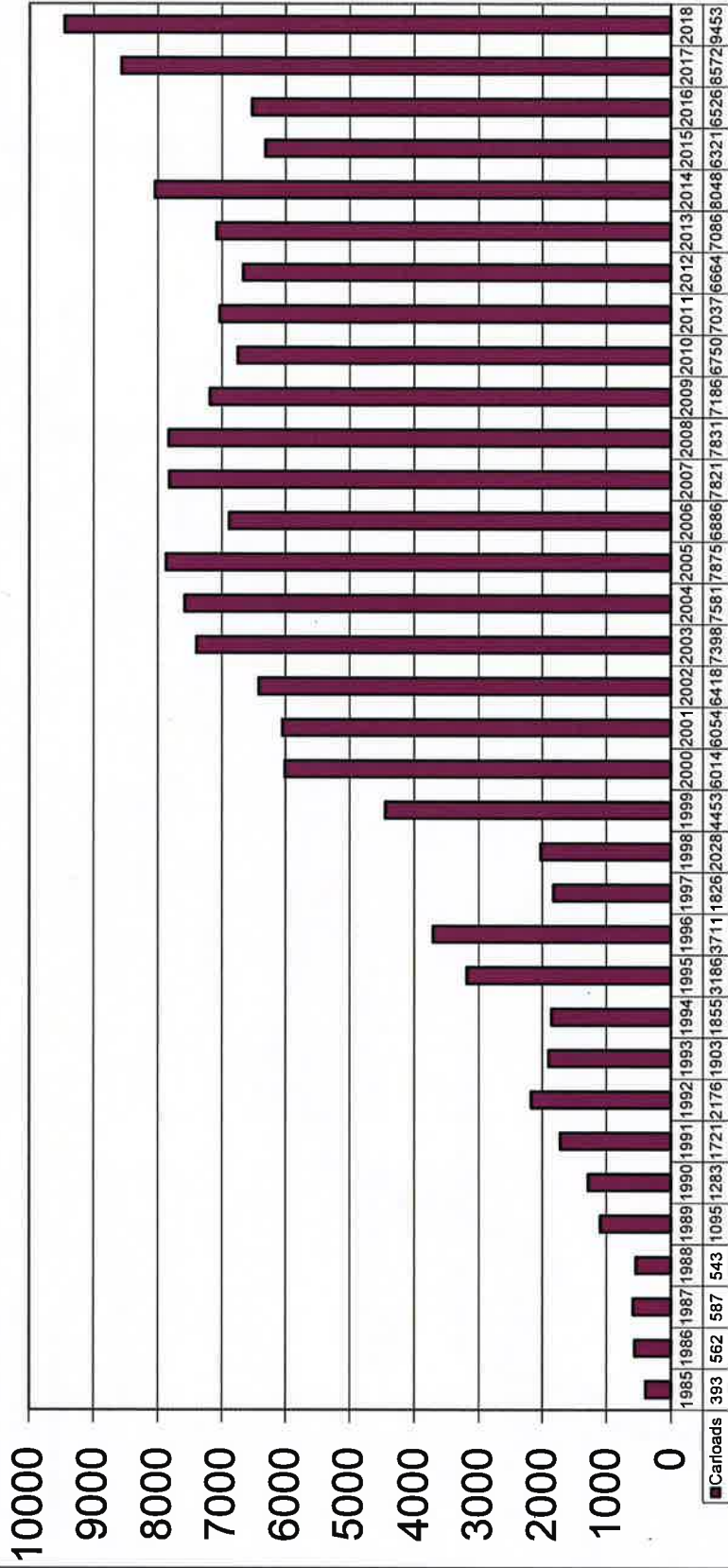
FACT SHEET
Scranton to New York City Passenger Rail Project
February 2019

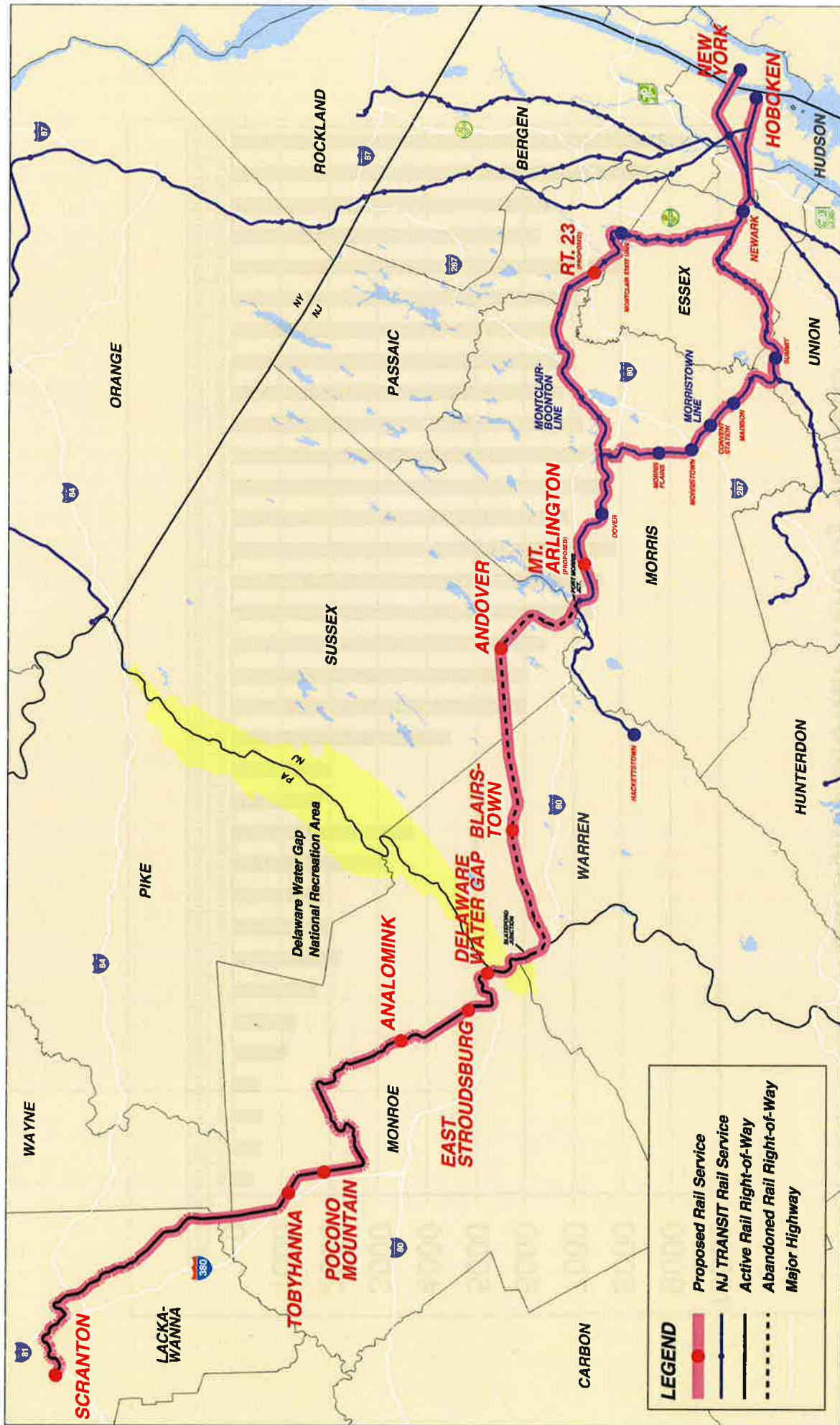
1. The Scranton to New York City rail restoration project is underway with the \$62 million federal grant which has funded the start of construction of the first 7 miles of rail trackage on the Lackawanna Cut Off to Andover, New Jersey including the construction of the passenger station and parking facilities at Andover.
2. The environmental approvals necessary for construction of the 28 mile Lackawanna Cutoff and construction of all stations and other upgrades for the entire project to Scranton was successfully obtained in October 2009 from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). This environmental review process took almost three years to complete and has advanced this project to the construction of the track to Andover, New Jersey.
3. Over 20,000 commuters (people with residences in Northeastern Pennsylvania) leave their homes in Northeastern Pennsylvania every morning during rush hour (4:00 AM to 9:00 AM) and must travel Interstate 80 to their jobs primarily in New Jersey and some in Manhattan.
4. Truck traffic alone is projected to double on I-80 in the next ten years, thereby making I-80 nearly useless as a commuter transportation asset during rush hours. The Martz commuter bus schedules are also being lengthened because of this growing congestion. For example, the 5:45 AM commuter bus now takes 3 hours and 15 minutes to get to New York City.
5. The other major benefit of the reconstruction of the 28 mile Lackawanna Cutoff between Port Morris and the Delaware Water Gap will not only be the institution of rail passenger commuter service to New York City but also the prospect of thru Amtrak passenger service (with dining and sleeper services) from New York City through the Poconos, Scranton, Binghamton, Syracuse, Buffalo, Cleveland and Chicago. In Syracuse, passengers would be able to connect to other Amtrak trains going to Chicago, Albany, Boston, Montreal, Toronto and many other destinations.
6. With tourism and recreation becoming one of our region's fastest growing industries, alternative and efficient transportation options are required to support the growth of this industry. For example, since a large percentage of NYC region residents do not own automobiles (75% of families in Manhattan do not own cars) it is vital to provide a modern and efficient passenger rail alternative to NEPA to partake of our growing tourism industry. These NYC residents would use our modern passenger service as their preferred option.
7. Another exciting area of economic development that the rail passenger service project would directly produce is the attraction of back office and perhaps home office professional businesses that are related to the New York City/Northern New Jersey Megalopolis (the Wall Street West Initiative). These businesses are related to the financial, bio science, educational and information technology industries and this sector demands modern and efficient rail transportation between NEPA and the NYC headquarters of these businesses. The new modern passenger equipment envisioned for the Scranton to New York City passenger service would successfully provide this element by providing comfortable, reliable, all weather, WIFI equipped equipment that would allow its riders to use the train as an extension of their business offices.

8. NEXT STEPS

- \$150,000 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Grant awarded to PNRRRA to update preliminary engineering reports. An additional \$150,000 in local matching share received from Lackawanna and Monroe Counties, PNRRRA and PennDOT Lackawanna/Luzerne Transportation Study MPO.
- \$400,000 LSA Grant has been applied for by both Lackawanna and Monroe Counties for more in depth engineering studies in order to bring this project to the point of requesting federal funding for final engineering and construction.
- With the direct involvement of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Congressional Delegations construction funding between Andover, NJ and Delaware Water Gap, PA will then be sought which will then provide a continuous passenger rail corridor between New York City and Monroe and Lackawanna Counties to Scranton, PA.
- The direct involvement of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey State Delegations, PennDOT and the New Jersey DOT is vital.
- **We respectfully request your support in contacting Governor Wolf and Secretary of Transportation Leslie Richards in providing PennDOT money to continue engineering which is the immediate requirement to continue and progress this project.**

Economic Growth Trend by Carloads

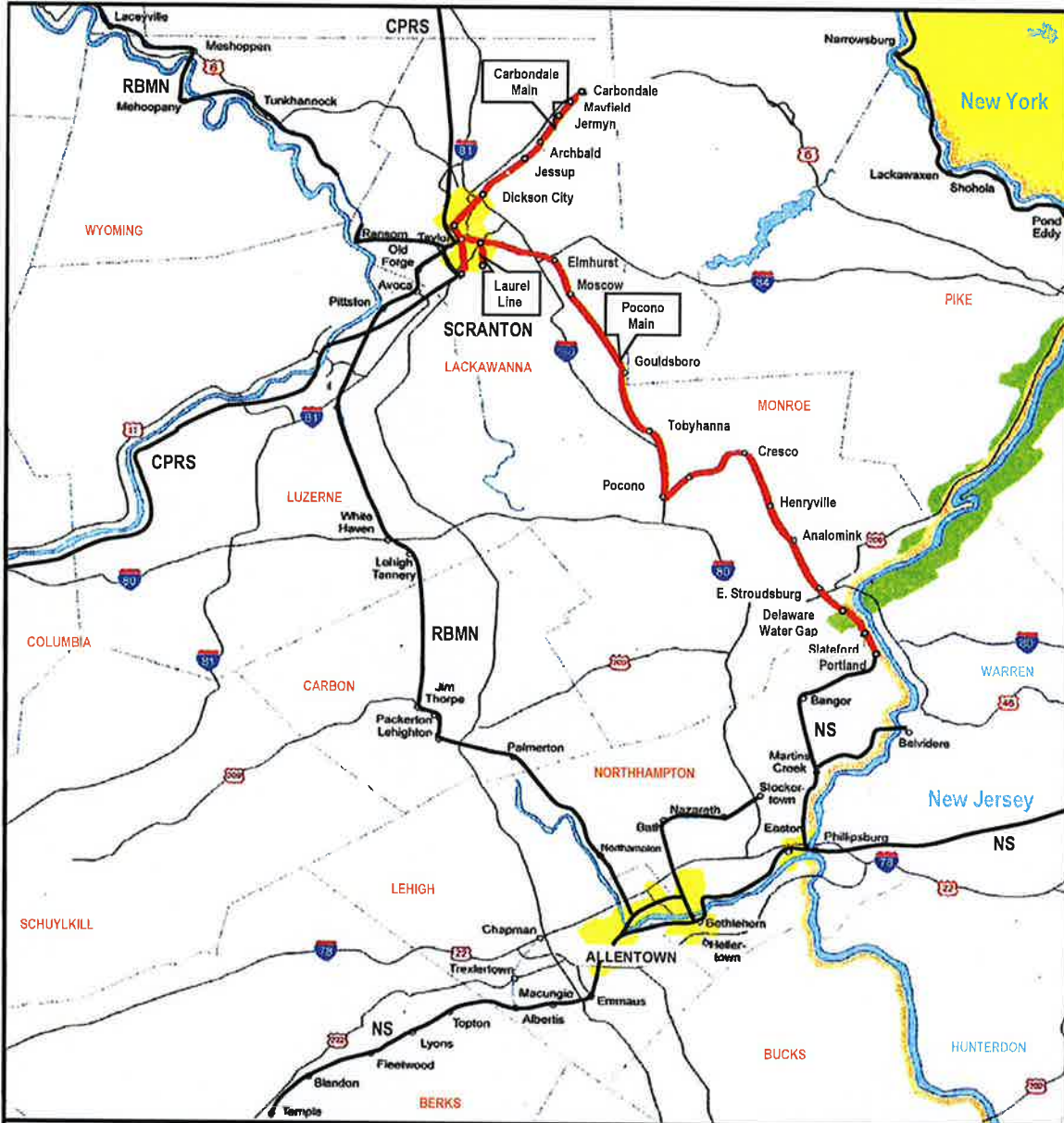




**Northwest New Jersey - Northeast Pennsylvania Rail Corridor
Lackawanna Cutoff**



November 2005



Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad Co., Inc.

April 1, 2011



- Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad
- Connecting Lines

Main Office Scranton, PA
(570) 343-4580
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