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I-80 eastbound testing and proactive grouting operations to stabilize roadway continue in Wharton, Morris County Motorists are urged to seek alternate routes and plan extra travel time

(Trenton) – New Jersey Department of Transportation crews are continuing advanced scanning, testing, and proactive drilling and grouting operations on I-80 eastbound near Exit 34 to stabilize the roadway in Wharton, Morris County.

While early indications suggest that repairs will take a minimum of several weeks, all work remains dependent on weather and testing results, making it difficult to determine an exact completion date. Crews will continue to work 24 hours a day to complete these repairs as safely and efficiently as possible.

"In order to safely reopen I-80, we must understand the complex subsurface conditions in the area and take the time to make repairs to ensure the safety and integrity of the roadway," **NJDOT Commissioner Fran O'Connor** said. "NJDOT and our contractors have been working 24 hours a day, despite several snow, rain, and freezing weather events, to assess the situation and stabilize the roadway. We appreciate the cooperation of the New Jersey State Police and local officials to help manage the additional traffic in the neighboring communities and thank the public for their understanding and patience as we repair the road safely."

"The NJDOT has been working around the clock to repair and reopen the I-80 in Wharton. I want to commend Commissioner O'Connor and the entire NJDOT team for their responsiveness to this difficult situation and for their cooperation with local officials to establish safe detour routes for the public's safety," **Senator Anthony M. Bucco** said. "Addressing this situation has not been easy, and I want to thank the commuters, residents, and businesses for their patience as the DOT works to complete the necessary testing so the ongoing repairs can be done as quickly and safely as possible."

"I want to thank the NJDOT team, the New Jersey State Police, and local officials for their nonstop efforts in resolving this issue," **Assemblywoman Aura K. Dunn** said. "While road closures and detours have caused inconvenience, the safety and long-term integrity of our infrastructure remain top priorities. Safe, reliable infrastructure is not a luxury; it is a necessity."

UPDATE

Over the weekend, advanced scanning and testing were expanded on I-80 westbound. As a precautionary measure, advanced scanning and testing were also extended further east and west on I-80 eastbound. In addition, advanced remote sensing technology is being used to monitor both I-80 eastbound and westbound.

Geophysical Testing was performed to develop a picture of what the earth looks like underneath the road. These tests take time to analyze and determine where there may be loose soils and voids. A void is not a sinkhole, but rather an empty space or cavity that exists underground. This information is used to identify key locations that may require further investigation.

Proactive drilling and grouting operations are underway to stabilize the roadway. **A total of 90 locations have been identified for assessment and mitigation. These are not all voids but locations requiring investigation.** The number of these locations may be adjusted as testing progresses.

This proactive approach helps identify and address potential problem areas before they develop into surface-level voids, depressions, or sinkholes. This type of operation requires a high degree of precision and measurements. To do so safely, the contractor is proceeding with extreme caution in the affected area. There are two drill rigs working 24 hours a day. This is a time consuming process as it requires the operator to drill down and fill the shaft with grout. The purpose of this is to firm up the base of the road, which is done when the grout spreads into any existing voids. As of this afternoon, Tuesday, February 25, 43 locations have been drilled, and 31 have been filled with grout.

The Department is working closely with engineering and mine experts and our federal partners to further assess subsurface conditions, including the influence of abandoned mines. The goal is to develop the most effective stabilization measures to ensure the long-term safety and reliability of the roadway.

After completing this phase of emergency repairs, NJDOT intends on installing a monitoring system to track surface and underground conditions. Remote sensing technology will scan the pavement for changes, while sensors beneath the road will detect early signs of subsurface movement. Deeper underground devices will monitor long-term soil stability.

TRAFFIC MITIGATION

NJDOT is working closely with local officials and the New Jersey State Police to coordinate detours and alternate routes in order to minimize the disruption of additional traffic in the neighboring communities. We ask motorists to avoid the area, plan extra travel time, and be patient while testing and repairs are ongoing.

State Police are manually controlling several traffic signals on Route 10 and Route 46, which serve as alternate routes. They will continue to do so on weekdays during the morning and evening rush hours to improve traffic flow. NJDOT also has adjusted the timing of several signals on Route 15, which are being monitored by the State Police, to help ease congestion. The

Department will continue to monitor traffic conditions and make adjustments as necessary to mitigate delays.

In addition, NJDOT is using technology to send messages to commercial truckers to provide information about the closure, detour, and alternate routes. The Department is also using digital messaging signs and working with our regional transportation partners to share information so drivers can make informed decisions about potential alternate routes to take.

DETOURS AND ALTERNATE ROUTES

All I-80 eastbound traffic is currently being detoured at Exit 34 and the following detour remains in place until further notice:

I-80 eastbound Exit 34 Detour:

- Motorists on I-80 eastbound are being directed to take Exit 34 to Route 15/Wharton/Dover/Sparta
- At the end of the ramp, stay right following signs for Route 15/Jefferson/Dover/Sparta/Picatiny Arsenal
- **Stay in the right lane on North Main Street** following signs for Route 15 North/Jefferson/Sparta
- **Bear right toward Route 15 northbound/Picatiny Arsenal**
- At the traffic signal, merge onto Route 15 northbound
- Stay left, following signs for Pondview Drive/U and Left Turns
- Using both lanes, make a U-turn at the Pondview Drive traffic signal and merge onto Route 15 southbound
- Stay left to take the exit to I-80 eastbound

Traffic is advised to use Exit 28 to take Route 10 eastbound or Route 46 eastbound as an alternate route to avoid the area. This exit is several miles before the closure:

Route 10 eastbound Alternate Route:

- Motorists on I-80 eastbound are advised to take Exit 28/Route 46 eastbound to Route 10/Ledgewood/Lake Hopatcong, which is several miles before the closure
- Continue on Route 46 eastbound
- Stay right to take Route 10 eastbound
- Take the exit to I-287 northbound
- Stay right to take the ramp to I-80 eastbound

Route 46 eastbound Alternate Route:

- Motorists on I-80 eastbound are advised to take Exit 28/Route 46 eastbound to Route 10/Ledgewood/Lake Hopatcong, which is several miles before the closure
- Continue on Route 46 eastbound
- Stay in the left two lanes to turn left at the traffic signal to continue on Route 46 eastbound
- Turn left onto Route 15 northbound in Dover back to I-80
or
- Continue on Route 46 eastbound for about 12 miles and stay left for I-80 eastbound

TIMELINE

- Monday, February 10** I-80 eastbound was closed and detoured at Exit 34 in Wharton, Morris County after a depression in the center lane was observed.
- Testing of the roadway began. While NJDOT crews were conducting soil tests on Monday night, the roadway collapsed.
- Tuesday, February 11** NJDOT crews excavated and stabilized the 11-foot by 11-foot sinkhole that was approximately four-feet deep. The compromised roadway is 75 feet away from the sinkhole repair completed in December. The area where that sinkhole was repaired is stable.
- Friday, February 14** Initial testing of the I-80 westbound roadway was conducted.
- Saturday, February 15** A new I-80 eastbound detour was implemented at the request of, and in coordination with, local officials to minimize the disruption of additional traffic in the neighboring communities.
- Sunday, February 16** During testing, a void was identified.
- Monday, February 17** The location where the void was identified was filled with grout.
- New Jersey State Police began manually controlling several traffic signals on Route 10 and Route 46 on weekdays during the morning and evening rush hours to improve traffic flow. NJDOT also adjusted the timing of several signals in the area to help ease congestion.
- Sunday, February 23** Additional testing on I-80 westbound was conducted and is being evaluated.

Motorists are encouraged to check NJDOT's traffic information website www.511nj.org for construction updates and real-time travel information. For NJDOT news follow us on X (Twitter) [@NewJerseyDOT](https://twitter.com/NewJerseyDOT), on the [NJDOT Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/NJDOT), or Instagram [@NewJersey.DOT](https://www.instagram.com/NewJersey.DOT).

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