

ASSEMBLY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 156

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 12, 2023

The Assembly Community Development and Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 156.

This resolution urges the Governor, the Commissioners of the Board of Public Utilities, and State departments receiving federal infrastructure funds under the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to renew their commitment to female, minority, and veteran owned small businesses, by increasing outreach, transparency, and monitoring of procurement practices and work to ensure that these businesses receive opportunities and contract awards for the funds provided in the IIJA at levels not just reflective of federal requirements, but the full diversity of the State population.

The IIJA is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to renew the nation's long-term commitment to rebuilding American competitiveness through its critical infrastructure. New Jersey will receive at least \$13.5 billion to address the State's most pressing transportation needs and build the Gateway Tunnel. According to recent reports, the State is expected to receive \$6.8 billion to invest in highways and roads, \$1.1 billion for bridge repairs, \$104 million for electric vehicle initiatives, \$24 million for enhancing ferry services, and \$4.1 billion to improve New Jersey's transit system. The IIJA is expected to create jobs and make needed investments in New Jersey's cities and rural communities. Federal funds will be allocated to New Jersey to expand broadband Internet access, remove lead and other harmful contaminants from our drinking water, clean up and revitalize polluted industrial sites, initiate flood resiliency projects, and help homeowners reduce energy costs through weatherization assistance.

It is imperative that elected leaders use this opportunity to maximize the benefit of the federal resources for all residents in the most fair and equitable manner. This includes taking steps to overcome factors that have prevented or inhibited participation by small businesses and minority, women, and veteran-owned business enterprises in the procurement opportunities offered by the State, and to ensure that the State government renews its commitment to these businesses in its procurement practices involving the awarding of federal infrastructure funds through increased outreach, enhanced transparency, and effective monitoring of progress made in this regard.

This will help make the federal infrastructure funds a game changer not only for our roads and bridges, but also for the State's small businesses and minority, women, and veteran-owned business enterprises. New Jersey's diverse population is an invaluable asset, and the State's economic strength and vitality are inextricably linked to the continued growth and success of our business community.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 18, which was also reported by the committee on this date.