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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** ATTENTION EDITORS, Rutgers-Eagleton Poll Director David Redlawsk may be contacted at 319-400-1134, 732-932-9384, ext. 285, or [redlawsk@rutgers.edu](mailto:redlawsk@rutgers.edu). Visit <http://eagletonpoll.blogspot.com> for more questions and tables.

**New Jerseyans Continue to Support Governor's Decision to Cut ARC Tunnel**  
Strongly Support Proposal to Extend Subway Line under the Hudson

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ – Controversy erupted in October when Governor Chris Christie announced that he would withdraw New Jersey's support for the Access to the Region's Core (ARC) tunnel project that would link northern New Jersey to Manhattan via the Hudson River. While opponents of the Governor's plan cited stifled economic growth, supporters heralded Christie's decision as financially responsible in a deficit-laden state. A new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll finds that support for Governor Christie's decision to cancel the project has grown from 51 percent to 56 percent since October's cancellation. At the same time, a substantial majority (74 percent) supports the recent proposal by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg to extend a subway line from Manhattan into New Jersey.

"It is clear that across New Jersey, residents continue to support the governor's decision to cancel the project," said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers. "At the same time, there is recognition that increasing mass transit options into and out of New York – if that can be done at a lower cost – is a good idea."

The poll of 906 New Jersey adults was conducted December 2-6. The full sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.3 percentage points. Random subsamples have a margin of error of +/- 4.4 percentage points.

**Thinking about economic benefits increases opposition to Christie's decision**

Supporters of the tunnel point to anticipated economic benefits, suggesting people would be more supportive of the project if they thought about its value. To test this, one group of respondents was asked whether they support Christie's decision before being asked to consider the economic benefits of the tunnel, while the other group was asked to think about economic benefits first. The October poll asked everyone the economic benefits question first.

Asked first about Christie's decision, 58 percent of New Jerseyans support canceling the tunnel, while 23 percent oppose it and 20 percent are unsure. But, when asked this question *after* a question about the economic importance of the tunnel project, opposition grows substantially,

to 37 percent, while only 7 percent are unsure. Even so, 56 percent support the governor's decision even after considering its potential economic benefits.

“Thinking about potential economic benefits does not decrease support for Christie's cancellation of the project,” said Redlawsk. “But it does cause opposition to grow because fewer respondents are uncertain, with more taking a position – generally against Christie's decision – if they think first about potential benefits of the tunnel.”

**Overwhelming support for the extension of NYC subway line to Secaucus**

In response to the cancellation of the ARC tunnel project, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg proposed extending the #7 subway line westward under the Hudson River to Secaucus. New Jerseyans are overwhelmingly in favor of this proposal, with 74 percent supporting the plan, and 13 percent opposing it, with another 12 percent unsure. Support for this proposal holds across both political parties and independents, as well as among both commuters and non-commuters.

**Most see some value to the tunnel; Asking about cancellation first makes it less valuable**

When asked to evaluate the tunnel project before being asked about its cancellation, 37 percent say it is “very important” to the economic development of the Garden State, while 38 percent say it is “somewhat important”, and only 12 percent say it is “not at all important.” In October, 28 percent thought the project was very important to economic growth, while 42 said “somewhat important”, and 23 percent said “not at all important.”

“While continuing to support Christie's decision overall, New Jerseyans have actually become more convinced that the tunnel would bring economic benefits to the state,” said Redlawsk. “A direct comparison to October with the same question order shows an increase of 9 points in how many say the project is “extremely important.”

But those asked about the tunnel's economic value after being asked about Gov. Christie's decision to end the project are much less likely to say the project is “very important” at only 22 percent. Forty-eight percent say it is “somewhat important”, and 22 percent say it is “not at all important”.

“This is a classic effect. Asking people to agree or disagree with the Governor's decision first tends to make them align their opinion about the project's value to their opinion of the decision,” said Redlawsk. “It is another warning that the way we ask questions and the order in which we ask them really matters if we want to understand public opinion.”

**Support for Christie’s decision drops somewhat in light of scenarios**

When asked about two scenarios surrounding the controversy around the ARC tunnel project, support for Governor Christie’s decision to cancel the project drops. The federal government has insisted that New Jersey pay back \$271 million allocated for the project, but Governor Christie is suing, arguing that payback is not required. When asked about continuation of the tunnel project in light of this payback obligation, 47 percent say it should have been continued, while only 37 percent say it should have been canceled. Almost all the shift comes from Democrats and independents: 55 percent of Republicans remain in favor of cancellation while only 42 percent of independents and 29 percent of Democrats think it should have been canceled, given the payback requirement.

Similar results come from asking if the project should have continued in light of the claims by supporters that cancellation would stifle job growth in the state. Given this scenario, 48 percent say it should have been continued and 40 percent support its cancellation, with 12 percent undecided. A majority (54 percent) of Republicans again continue to support cancellation, while independents narrowly favor continuation of the project in this scenario, 45 percent to 42 percent. Considering the potential effect on jobs, Democrats say the project should have been continued, 62 percent to 28 percent.

“In the abstract, support for Christie’s decision is very strong across parties,” said Redlawsk. “But when potential effects of the cancellation are described, support by Democrats drops precipitously. This suggests that while even Democrats see some validity in canceling the project, when given specific reasons to oppose this decision by Christie, they respond.”

**QUESTIONS AND TABLES FOLLOW ON THE NEXT PAGE**

**Rutgers-Eagleton Poll December 2-6, 2010**

**Questions and Tables**

The questions covered in the release of December 9, 2010 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

**Next I would like to ask a few questions about the proposed commuter rail tunnel under the Hudson River to New York City known as the ARC, or Access to the Region’s Core project.**

**[QUESTION ORDER EXPERIMENT VARIED ORDER OF FIRST TWO QUESTIONS. RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO RECEIVE EITHER ECONOMIC VALUE OR SUPPORT FOR CANCELLATION QUESTION FIRST]**

**Q. How important do you think this proposed rail tunnel under the Hudson River from New Jersey to New York would be to the future economic development of New Jersey? Is it very important, somewhat important, or not at all important?**

	Dec 2010	Dec 2010	Oct 2010
	Asked Before	Asked After	Asked Before
	Support for	Support for	Support for
	Cancellation	Cancellation	Cancellation
Very Important	37%	22%	28%
Somewhat Important	38%	48%	42%
Not at all Important	12%	22%	23%
Don’t Know	13%	8%	7%
N=	459	447	880

Before Cancellation Question	Party			Employment			Region		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	FT	PT	Ret	Not Empl	North Jersey	Rest of State
Very Important	41%	35%	36%	39%	39%	37%	33%	36%	37%
Somewhat Important	37%	38%	39%	39%	39%	31%	45%	39%	38%
Not at all Important	11%	15%	9%	10%	19%	14%	12%	15%	11%
DK	11%	12%	17%	13%	4%	19%	11%	11%	14%
N=	143	201	101	223	52	101	83	171	288

After Cancellation Question	Dem	Ind	Rep	FT	PT	Ret	Not Empl	North Jersey	Rest of State
Support	58%	53%	66%	59%	47%	68%	54%	59%	58%
Oppose	24%	24%	18%	22%	28%	18%	25%	24%	22%
Don’t Know	18%	22%	16%	19%	25%	14%	21%	18%	20%
N=	147	189	106	202	60	93	89	164	283

**Q. Governor Christie recently canceled the ARC tunnel project saying that massive cost overruns mean New Jersey can no longer afford it. Do you support or oppose Governor Christie’s decision to cancel the tunnel project?**

	Dec 2010 Asked After Economic Value	Dec 2010 Asked Before Economic Value	Oct 2010 Asked After Economic Value
Support	56%	58%	51%
Oppose	37%	23%	39%
Don’t Know	7%	19%	10%
N=	450	447	874

After Economic Value	Party			Employment			Region		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	FT	PT	Ret	Not Empl	North Jersey	Rest of State
Support	55%	59%	52%	52%	57%	57%	64%	56%	56%
Oppose	41%	35%	36%	41%	41%	35%	30%	37%	37%
Don’t Know	4%	6%	11%	7%	2%	8%	6%	6%	7%
N=	144	193	99	216	51	101	81	166	284

Before Economic Value	Dem	Ind	Rep	FT	PT	Ret	Not Empl	North Jersey	Rest of State
Support	58%	53%	66%	59%	47%	68%	54%	59%	58%
Oppose	24%	24%	18%	22%	28%	18%	25%	24%	22%
Don’t Know	18%	22%	16%	19%	25%	14%	21%	18%	20%
N=	147	189	106	202	60	93	89	164	283

**[END QUESTION ORDER RANDOMIZATION]**

**Q. Now that the ARC tunnel has been canceled, the federal government says New Jersey will have to pay back 271 million dollars. Knowing this, should New Jersey have continued with the project or canceled it even though the money has to be paid back?**

Continued	47%
Canceled	37%
DK	16%
N=	902

	Party			Employment			Region		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	FT	PT	Ret	Not Empl	North Jersey	Rest of State
Continued	62%	46%	27%	43%	62%	36%	59%	51%	44%
Canceled	29%	36%	55%	40%	28%	45%	31%	37%	38%
DK	10%	18%	18%	18%	11%	19%	9%	12%	18%
N=	291	389	202	422	112	194	170	334	568

**Q. Some people argue that without the tunnel, job growth in New Jersey will be badly hurt, since existing commuter trains are running at full capacity. Knowing this, should New Jersey have continued with the project or canceled it even if it slows future job growth?**

Continued	48%
Canceled	40%
DK	12%
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N=	900

	Party			Employment			Region		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	FT	PT	Ret	Not Empl	North Jersey	Rest of State
Continued	62%	45%	33%	46%	54%	42%	56%	48%	48%
Canceled	28%	42%	54%	42%	37%	43%	33%	41%	39%
DK	10%	13%	13%	12%	8%	14%	11%	10%	13%
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N=	290	387	203	421	110	194	172	333	565

**Q. There has been talk that New York might extend a subway line under the river to Secaucus at significantly less cost than the ARC project. Would you support such a plan?**

Yes	74%
No	13%
DK	12%
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N=	903

	Party			Employment			Region		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	FT	PT	Ret	Not Empl	North Jersey	Rest of State
Yes	71%	78%	72%	78%	76%	66%	75%	76%	74%
No	16%	13%	11%	11%	18%	13%	14%	15%	12%
DK	14%	9%	17%	11%	6%	21%	11%	9%	14%
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N=	290	389	204	422	112	193	171	334	568

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**Rutgers-Eagleton Poll December 2-6, 2010**  
New Jersey Statewide Poll

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone from December 2-6, 2010 with a scientifically selected random sample of 906 New Jersey adults. Data are weighted to represent known parameters in the New Jersey population, using gender, age, race, and Hispanic ethnicity matching to US Census Bureau data. All results are reported with these weighted data. This telephone poll included 725 landline respondents and 181 cell phone respondents, acquired through random digit dialing.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error for a sample of 906 adults is +/-3.3 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adults favored a particular position, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.7 and 53.3 percent (50 +/-3.3) had all New Jersey adults been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by Braun Research, Inc., of Princeton, New Jersey. The questionnaire was developed and all data analysis was completed in house at the Eagleton Institute of Politics Center for Public Interest Polling. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, a non-partisan academic center focused on the study and teaching of politics and the political process.

<b>Weighted Sample Characteristics (N=906 Registered Voters)</b>			
32% Dem	48% Male	16% 18-29	69% White
45% Independent	52% Female	36% 30-49	12% Black
23% Republican		26% 50-64	10% Hispanic
		22% 65+	7% Asian
			2% Other