

Remarks on the Interstate 95 Overpass Collapse and Federal Rebuilding Efforts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

June 17, 2023

The President. Hello, folks. We just finished a—an aerial tour of—survey of I-95 and—from the tanker truck explosion, the damage done.

And, to the people of Philadelphia, I want to say that we're with you. We're going to stay with you and—as this is rebuilt—until it's totally finished. And we're going to try to do that in as quick a time as possible.

And I told the Governor there's no more important project right now in the country, as far as I'm concerned. I'm directing my team—not figuratively, but literally—to move heaven and earth to get it done as soon as humanly possible.

So, since Sunday morning, we've worked closely with Governor Shapiro, Senators Casey and Fetterman, and Representative Boyle—it's his district—and Mayor Kenney to provide the necessary Federal assistance to support an all-hands-on-deck response to this crisis. And it is a crisis.

And I want to thank these officials for working collaboratively, effectively, efficiently with each other and with our Federal team.

I also want to thank the fire—first responders who dealt with the immediate aftermath and the workers onsite. We saw some of them today as we flew over the site. They've been working 24/7 to clear the debris.

Within hours of the crash, officials from the U.S. Department of Transportation were on the ground, supporting Pennsylvania officials to get the site cleared and be able to start the rebuilding. The immediate release of \$3 million—it was called "quick release" emergency funds—were made to offset the cost of repairs.

This is just a downpayment, obviously. It's a lot more than that. We're going to be getting a lot more Federal funding out the door in the coming weeks.

Additionally, Pennsylvania has already received \$8.9 billion from the bipartisan infrastructure law, including \$6.5 billion for transportation projects, which gives the Governor some flexibility to move existing State funds to this project right away, knowing that this money is in the bank.

Also, union crews have been hard at work 24/7 since the crash. Operating engineers, the laborers, the carpenters, cement finishers, teamsters, and the ironworkers are going to help rebuild. And they're doing—they're doing it right now.

And folks here know that the crews finished demolition on Thursday, ahead of schedule, and now they're working on emergency repairs to quickly and safely reopen the roadway to traffic.

The Federal Government—I've committed we're going to reimburse 100 percent of this phase of the work in well over the first 200 days. And then, after that, 90 percent of the work. We'll be here until the end. We won't leave until it's finished.

And that's why I want to—I asked Mayor Landrieu, who runs my operation relative to the infrastructure legislation, to lead the effort. He knows, as mayor, what it takes—Mayor Kenney,

as you know—to get things done. He—New Orleans never had any problems like tornados and hurricanes and floods and the like. But, all kidding aside, he's on it—on this every day.

We're using materials made of recycled glass, manufactured here in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. And the design of the project is incredibly innovative in order to get this work done in record time. We're also working with local officials to redirect traffic, minimize congestion, and—along alternative routes.

Look, I grew up not very far from here, just across the line in Pennsylvania—I mean from Pennsylvania—in Claymont, Delaware. I know how important this stretch of highway is not just to Philly, but to the entire Northeast corridor and to my home State.

Over 150,000 vehicles travel on it every day, including 14,000—14,000—trucks. It's critical. It's critical to our economy, and it's critical to our quality of life.

We're going to continue to do everything we can within our power to get this back open as quickly and easily as possible. We're not leaving until it's done. And we're going to get this done, God willing, in record time.

I'm looking forward to hearing more from the folks on the ground in a moment.

And now I'm going to turn it over to the Governor, who is doing one hell of a job. He gets tired of my calls, I think, but he's doing a hell of a job.

Thank you.

Gov.

Governor Joshua D. Shapiro of Pennsylvania. Thank you.

The President. There you are.

Gov. Shapiro. Thank you very much.

[At this point, Gov. Shapiro, Sens. Robert P. Casey, Jr., and John K. Fetterman, Rep. Brendan F. Boyle, and Mayor James F. Kenney of Philadelphia made remarks; no transcript was provided. Mayor Kenney concluded his remarks as follows.]

Mayor Kenney. But he—the President of the United States called me to see what he could do to help us. And that says all you need to know about this President and this man here. So thank you very much, Mr. President. We really appreciate it, and we love you. Thank you.

The President. I might add, if I didn't, I'd be sleeping alone. *[Laughter]* Do I have to explain—I'd better explain that—some don't know what I'm taking about. My wife's a Philly girl. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. in a hangar at Philadelphia International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Coordinator Mitchell J. Landrieu, in his former capacity as mayor of New Orleans, LA.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : I-95 overpass collapse, Federal rebuilding efforts in Philadelphia, PA.

Locations: Philadelphia, PA.

Names: Boyle, Brendan F.; Casey, Robert P., Jr.; Fetterman, John K.; Kenney, James F.; Landrieu, Mitchell J.; Shapiro, Joshua D.

Subjects: First responders, service and dedication; Infrastructure improvements; Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Coordinator; Labor movement and organized labor; Pennsylvania, Governor; Pennsylvania, Interstate 95 overpass collapse; Pennsylvania, President's visit.

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