

COUNTY OF MERCER

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BRIAN M. HUGHES
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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COUNTY TO CLOSE JACOBS CREEK BRIDGE BASED ON LATEST INSPECTION REPORT

TRENTON, N.J.—Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes has ordered that the Jacobs Creek Bridge be immediately closed to traffic based on findings by an independent engineering firm contracted by the New Jersey Department of Transportation to inspect county bridges.

Based on the findings of an inspection on the structure last week, IH Engineers of Princeton has determined the bridge has been stressed to such a degree that the firm believes safe passage of vehicles heavier than the 3-ton posted limit cannot be guaranteed, and stated that if vehicles over that limit were to use the span, the bridge may experience further structural deterioration. In its report, IH recommends immediate closure of Jacobs Creek Bridge.

The bridge will be closed indefinitely and a detour route established until the County can move forward with a new course of action.

Mercer County has plans to replace the existing bridge, which, due to severe structural deficiencies, has over the years been reduced to a 3-ton weight limit. The County plans to replace the span with a new bridge that will be built to modern standards. The existing structure, which has historical significance, is slated to be preserved, restored, and relocated to a local park.

“Based on this new information and recommendation, Mercer County must close Jacobs Creek Bridge until we can make the bridge safe for travel,” Hughes stated.

Hughes inquired about having law enforcement posted at the bridge around the clock, but the cost to man the bridge, calculated to be between \$200,000 and \$300,000 a year based on 24/7 police coverage, is not a reasonable solution, he said.

County engineers will ask to meet with the State Historic Preservation Office to determine what, if any, immediate repairs can be made to the bridge while keeping the bridge’s historic status intact. An engineering study could be undertaken if any temporary repairs are recommended by the state.

Hughes and Hopewell Township Mayor Vanessa Sandom recently met with state Department of Transportation Commissioner Stephen Dilts to request lowering weight limits on nearby stretches of roadway leading to the bridge, and will continue to pursue that measure, but even if the nearby routes were reduced to 4 tons, it would not benefit the current lack of safety of the existing structure.

Detour route: Nursery Road (County Route 647) to Washington Crossing Road (CR 546).

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