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NEWS
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**CAPE MAY COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
Office of the County Engineer**

**Townsend's Inlet Bridge Spans 1-7 Replacement
Notice of Anticipated Bridge Opening Delay**

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE, NJ -- In September 2018, the County in cooperation with the Cape May County Bridge Commission engaged a contractor to replace spans 1-7 of the Townsend's Inlet Bridge. Although originally proposed to be a substructure repair project, additional pre-design inspections revealed a degree of deterioration and scour requiring span replacement. As a result, recognizing the significant importance of the bridge to residents and summer commercial interests, both the design and construction contracts were accelerated with the goal of obtaining a May 22, 2019 completion date.

Unfortunately, attaining the May 22nd completion date left little margin for delays resulting from weather, tidal events, and the overall complexity of the project. Despite adding additional manpower and work shifts (at times 24 hours per day of construction activity), several construction challenges including those associated with demolition, underwater salvage operations, and subsurface geotechnical complications have adversely affected the bridge's completion schedule. Regrettably, the aftermath of the previous construction issues will result in a substantial delay of the planned opening date of the bridge. Based upon the best information available to the County at this time, it is estimated that the Townsend's Inlet Bridge will not open before late summer.

With public safety as the foremost concern, but with keen awareness of the inconvenience and impacts the delay will cause residents and businesses in Avalon and Sea Isle City, the County and all involved in the Townsend Inlet project are working together to achieve the earliest opening date possible and will be able to better project the expected opening date in the next thirty days after key construction activities are completed.

Background:

The Townsends Inlet Bridge along with all other bridges in Cape May County undergo routine scheduled inspections for the purpose of ensuring the safety to the users. Both above water and submerged elements of the bridge are monitored and evaluated, and as a result of these inspections, repair and/or replacement of bridge components is evaluated.

The replacement of the seven Townsend Inlet Bridge spans arose after inspections revealed that replacement versus repair was needed in order to provide the safest and most cost-effective means resolution.