

## **NJ senators: Obama budget has \$200M for Hudson Tunnel**

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**GANNETT WASHINGTON BUREAU**

WASHINGTON - New Jersey Sens. Frank Lautenberg and Robert Menendez say President Barack Obama's 2010 budget will contain \$200 million to continue work on state's biggest transportation project building a second set of rail tunnels under the Hudson River.

However, the money was not included in the budget details Obama released this morning. The tunnel money is expected to be included in documents the Department of Transportation is scheduled to release later today.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood spoke to Lautenberg and Menendez today to inform them in advance about the \$200 million and a larger federal commitment to contribute money in the future.

The tunnel project is expected to cost \$9 billion. The federal share is about \$3 billion. The tunnel is expected to be completed in 2017 and help ease congestion for NJ Transit and Amtrak trains and improve passenger rail travel up and down the East Coast.

Congress has final say in monetary matters. It can reject or amend the president's spending proposals.

The White House also said Obama's \$3.6 trillion budget would also cut taxes paid by 3.2 million New Jersey families, help 9,000 low-income state residents attend college by increasing Pell Grant aid amounts, and provide a 2.9 percent pay raise to 25,000 New Jerseyans serving in the military.

Republicans argue the budget is too costly and relies on borrowed money to pay for ambitious new spending programs.

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