



New York State Thruway Authority
New York State Canal Corporation



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**TESTIMONY OF BOB MEGNA, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NEW YORK STATE THRUWAY AUTHORITY & CANAL CORPORATION**

**2015 JOINT HEARING OF THE LEGISLATIVE FISCAL COMMITTEES - TRANSPORTATION
THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2015**

Chairman DeFrancisco, Chairman Farrell, and members of the Senate and Assembly Fiscal and Transportation Committees... Thank you for having me here today. I am Bob Megna, Acting Executive Director of the New York State Thruway Authority and the New York State Canal Corporation.

This is a very significant year for the Thruway Authority as represented in the Executive Budget: The Executive Budget proposes a capital appropriation of nearly \$1.3 billion for the *Thruway Stabilization Program*. We are extremely grateful to the Governor for this infusion of capital from the more-than-\$5 billion settlements with banks and financial institutions. Some of these funds will be used to eliminate the need for a toll increase this year. Some will be used to support capital projects throughout the Thruway system.

Of course, a significant portion will be invested in the New NY Bridge project, which will help keep tolls at the Tappan Zee as low as possible for as long as possible. Design-build contractor Tappan Zee Constructors, LLC, has now driven 77 percent of the piles that make up the foundation of this 100-year Hudson River crossing between Westchester and Rockland Counties. The first vertical pier columns rose above the Hudson in September, 2014. The pile caps that will support the iconic open towers of the new twin-span bridge are also in place.

In October, Governor Cuomo welcomed the I Lift NY super crane to the project site. One of the world's largest floating cranes, I Lift NY is one of the keys to helping save more than \$1 billion on the project compared to early cost estimates, in part by allowing large sections of the new cable-stayed bridge to be pre-fabricated off site in a safer, more efficient manner and brought in by barge.

The Executive Budget also proposes to authorize the Thruway Authority and the New York State Department of Transportation to enter into agreements to provide mutual aid through the sharing of employees, services and resources where appropriate – which will help us maximize every opportunity for operational efficiencies and cost savings.

As you know, our operations include the state canal system, which spans 524 miles and includes the Erie, Champlain, Oswego and Cayuga-Seneca Canals. The canals and the Erie Canalway bike and pedestrian trail are increasingly popular recreational destinations for New Yorkers and other visitors. The canal system generates an estimated \$380 million in annual tourism spending, and commercial and residential development along the canals is increasing.

The canals are also still used for commercial shipping, and a 2014 report found that the canal system supports over \$6.2 billion annually in non-tourism economic activity across the state by providing water for local drinking water as well as agricultural, industrial and power generation uses.

One final note: We could not do any of what we do without our employees across the state, and I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge their hard work, dedication and ongoing commitment to the highest standards of safety and reliability in every area of our operations.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.