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TESTIMONY

**John Cooney, Jr. -- Executive Director  
Construction Industry Council of Westchester & Hudson Valley, Inc.**

**Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2020-2021 Executive Budget Proposal  
Topic: *Transportation*  
The New York State Department of Transportation Capital Program**

**Tuesday, January 28, 2020 -- 9:30 am  
Hamilton Hearing Room B  
Legislative Office Building  
Albany, NY**

Good morning Chairman Kennedy, Chairman Magnarelli and committee members.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important public hearing. My name is John Cooney, Jr., and I serve as the Executive Director of the Construction Industry Council of Westchester & Hudson Valley, Inc. The CIC acts as the collective bargaining agent for some 600 employers in the heavy – highway contracting community as well as hundreds of suppliers and builders throughout the region aligned with DOT Region 8.

As advocates for the heavy highway and transportation infrastructure sector of construction, CIC partners with some 30 union locals of organized labor, and collectively speaks for more than 30,000 local residents who are employees of these enterprises and members of families throughout the seven counties of the lower Hudson Valley.

As you are aware, the Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s 2020-2021 budget proposal contains a proposal of \$11.9 billion for a two-year New York State DOT capital program. The New York State DOT capital program has historically covered a five-year time line. This five-year time framework allows the department and industry the needed horizon to plan and allocate the proper assets to deliver the program.

We are disappointed with the two-year term of the proposed capital plan but we understand that it is impractical to plan an overall transportation investment lacking a federal highway authorization. We encourage all New York State government leaders to fund a NYS DOT five-year capital plan in the range of \$35 billion to \$40 billion as soon as a federal highway funding plan is reauthorized. It is evident that our federal government continues to neglect highway funding, so it becomes the responsibility of all states, including New York State, to increase the level of highway spending to address the backlog and stay current with maintenance and improvements.

As we all know, the delivery of the New York State DOT capital plan is the driver for high-quality, well paid living-wage skilled jobs. However, not as well known—or perhaps not often discussed—is that the NYS DOT capital plan is the foundation and driver for economic development across New York State. The maintenance and upgrade of our roads and bridges is vital to the overall economic health of New York State.

During the term of the present New York State DOT capital plan, road and bridge conditions across the state have at best been maintained in a continuing state of disrepair and in some direct instances have worsened. According to the latest studies performed by TRIP, a national transportation research non-profit group, shows that nearly half of major locally and state-maintained roads are in poor or mediocre conditions. Furthermore, in a separate study performed by TRIP, it was reported that 10% -- which is the equivalent of 1,757 of New York's 17,521 bridges -- are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition. The 1,757 poor/structurally deficient bridges carry 11,590, 945 vehicle per day.

In short, there is much more work to be done to maintain and upgrade New York State's roads and bridges.

The governor's proposal of a two-year NYS DOT capital plan of \$11.9 billion represents a 25% increase over the last two years of the now expiring NYS DOT 5-year capital plan. This \$2.9 billion increase is a critical increased investment in our roads and bridges. When you look into the details of the proposed two-year \$11.9 billion NYS DOT capital plan, you quickly see that \$2.1 billion of the proposed \$2.9 billion increase will be used for priority projects such as the Van Wyck and Bruckner expressways. In previous testimony, CIC expressed support for these types of projects as a necessary investment in the growth of the State's economy. We are also advocating for Route 17/I-86 in Orange County as a priority project and would urge its inclusion in the proposed NYS DOT capital plan.

I am sure many if not all of you are questioned relative to the condition of our local roads and bridges. The roads and bridges in question are either in the New York State network or the local network. Simply put the traveling public does not care who owns the road or bridge; they just want it fixed, reliable and safe. Study after study indicate the condition of our road and bridge network are aging and deteriorating. CIC along with our partners in the New York Road & Infrastructure Coalition know as NYRIC propose the following increased funding in each of the proposed two-year NYS DOT capital plan.

#### **Add \$1.0 Billion (\$500M/year)**

##### **Annual Breakdown:**

**\$200 million increase Core Program**

**\$100 million increase CHIPS Program**

**\$50 million increase PAVE-NY**

**\$50 million increase BRIDGE-NY**

**\$100 million new funding for City Routes Program/Urban Roads Initiative \***

\*This new program is targeted at the 600 miles of roads that are designated as state touring routes but are the responsibility of localities. These state touring routes have a 10% higher fair or poor rating compared to other state-maintained roads. The new program would target these routes for critical upgrades.

The NYRIC consortium of employers, labor unions and industry professionals recommend a \$1.0 billion increase of \$500 million in each year for the upcoming two-year period proposed in the NYS DOT capital plan. As you can see, the increase is targeted at the core of the NYS DOT road network along with increased funding for local government roads and bridges. The traveling residents of New York State

deserve to see improvement in their roads and bridges. This proposed increase to the already increased NYS DOT capital plan targets the core assets across the state that are in most need of improvement.

The State of New York and New York State DOT, along with the contracting community, have helped in spearheading multiple innovations in procurement, design, technology and safety. These innovations and future innovations help leverage every tax payer dollar. What is needed now is simply increased funding to drive improved conditions in roads and bridges for the citizens of New York State.

The investment in our roads and bridges is a necessary and extremely important driver of economic development in our great state. We gratefully appreciate allowing CIC the time to speak on this matter, and I look forward to working with you in the future.

Thank you.

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