

Call to Finally Fund Lifesaving Crash Gate on I-84

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WAWAYANDA – Senator James Skoufis (D-Orange County) and Assemblyman Karl Brabenec (R-Deerpark) joined Town of Wawayanda Supervisor Denise Quinn and local first responders on Monday, calling on the state’s Department of Transportation (DOT) and Governor Hochul to advance funding for a long-sought ‘crash gate’ on I-84. Local officials in Wawayanda and the State Police have been calling for installation of a new emergency access point between the Goshen and Mountain Road exits, a more than 10-mile stretch of interstate that prevents timely emergency response, for over 20 years.

On September 21, a charter bus carrying 40 students and four adults from Nassau County rolled into a ravine along this stretch, resulting in two fatalities and 40 injured riders, with five in critical condition. First responders have long argued that a new crash gate on I-84 could cut emergency response times by 10-15 minutes; current access points require local responders such as the Slate Hill Fire Department to track several miles east or west of an accident scene before finally gaining entry to east- or west-bound interstate lanes. In the case of Thursday’s rollover, the injured were transported to six different hospitals in the area.



Assemblyman Karl Brabenec, newly representing Wawayanda, remains committed to delivering a crash gate.

“When lifesaving care is needed, every second counts,” said Senator Skoufis, whose district changed in January to include the Town of Wawayanda. “Supervisor Quinn and the dedicated first responders who work in and around Wawayanda know all too well how detrimental this lack of interstate access has been in times of emergency, like what we saw last Thursday. I urge the DOT and Governor Hochul to prioritize this long-awaited investment, which will literally save lives on this heavily trafficked route and limit strain on our first responder’s resources.”

“There are numerous motor vehicle accidents and incidents that happen on this stretch of Interstate 84,” said Assemblyman Brabenec. “This emergency entrance is critical to improving response time for our first responders and ultimately saving lives. This project has been unnecessarily delayed for several years, which is unacceptable, and that’s why it is crucial to get it completed as soon as possible. The Senator and I will continue our efforts advocating to the Governor and executive branch agencies to finally get this done.”

“Our first responders did an incredible job on Thursday,” said Town of Wawayanda Supervisor Denise Quinn. “I want to thank the Senator and the Assemblyman for working so quickly to take up this cause, we’re very lucky to have them representing us.”

“Since I stepped into this role over a decade ago, we’ve had several unfortunate fatalities along this stretch of I-84,” said Orange County Fire Coordinator Vini Tankasali. “The Slate Hill department is one of our best trained in Orange County, they’re outfitted well, and it’s time we stand behind them to provide this critical resource to help them do their jobs.”

“We are eager to shed light on how critical it is for us to have this crash gate,” said Slate Hill Fire District Chief Michael Dally. “Last week’s horrific incident has brought attention to this once again, and I hope this time is different. Every minute counts in these situations – not only for the fire department, but for all other incoming emergency services personnel.”