



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Elected Officials, Union Leaders Call for Critical Road Safety Investments in Next State Budget

PETE HARCKHAM December 5, 2024

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State Sen. Pete Harckham at the IUOE Local 137 Training Center with (l-r) Assemblymembers Dana Levenberg, MaryJane Shimsky and Chris Burdick alongside him at the podium

NYSDOT Region 8, which includes the Hudson Valley, has the worst rated roads in the state

*Montrose, NY* – A group of elected officials and union leaders from the lower Hudson Valley called for critical road safety investments in the next State Budget at a press conference

today held here at the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 137 Training Center. Included in the attendees' call was the need for \$800 million of increased funding for transportation needs in the next State Budget, as well as much-needed equitable funding—\$100 million—for New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Region 8, which encompasses the Hudson Valley.

New York State Senator Pete Harckham was joined at the press conference by several members of the New York State Assembly, including Dana Levenberg, Chris Burdick, MaryJane Shimsky and Matt Slater, plus several local elected officials.

To see a video of the press conference, click [here](#).

“Good roads are essential to preserving the quality of life and economic vitality of the Hudson Valley and all of New York State. Our part of the state has more state roads, and they are in greater need of repair than anywhere else in the state. Our residents deserve a proportionate investment in our infrastructure,” said **Senator Pete Harckham**. “The situation we have here now, though, is dire, and requires a substantial investment in our transportation infrastructure. We are pointing out this critical need in advance of the Executive’s next budget proposal with the hope that the additional funding necessary will be included. Flat spending will not stop our roadways from deteriorating, and cuts in spending will imperil motorists traveling on state roadways, especially here in the Hudson Valley.”

“As we approach the 2025-26 legislative session and budget season, my conference remains firmly committed to investing in our state’s roadways and critical infrastructure.” said **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins**. “I am happy to work alongside Senator Pete Harckham, the New York Roadway Infrastructure Coalition (NYRIC), and the Construction Industry Council of Westchester and Hudson Valley to fervently advocate for NYSDOT Region 8. As reports show that Region 8 includes some of the poorest rated roads and bridges

in the entirety of New York, we know that allocating funding and rallying support for projects in the region must be a top priority.”

John T. Cooney, executive director of the Construction Industry Council of Westchester and Hudson Valley, Inc., led a group of union leaders at the press conference that included representatives from Laborers (LiUNA) Local 60, Laborers (LiUNA) Local 235, Carpenters Local 279 and Teamsters Local 456. Jeff Loughlin, business manager of IUOE Local 137, hosted the event.

The New York Roadway Infrastructure Coalition, a statewide organization that unites industry, labor, business and community support groups in advocating for capital funding to address the state’s transportation needs, recently called on Governor Hochul to add \$800 million for core projects in the next State Budget to counter inflation costs that are impacting construction work that ensures the safety of roads, bridges and transportation systems statewide. Last year, Hochul’s Executive Budget included \$7.6 billion for the third year of the five-year \$32.9 billion NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Capital Plan.

Meanwhile, NYSDOT’s Region 8, which encompasses the Hudson Valley and includes 5,461 lane miles of roadway, the most in the state, has New York’s worst rated roads and bridges. According to NYSDOT statistics, 60% of Region 8 roads and half of its bridges are in poor condition. By comparison, Region 1, which includes Albany, has 63% of its roads ranked as “good condition,” Long Island’s roads are ranked 63% as being “good to excellent” and New York City’s roads condition is ranked 89% as “good.”

The woefulness of NYSDOT Region 8 roads can be attributed to the number of its repaved lane miles, which have dropped by almost half in two years, from 430 miles in 2022 to 245 miles in 2024. (Statewide, NYSDOT repaving and patching decreased from 4,000 miles in 2022 to an expected 2,200 miles in 2024 based on tonnage of asphalt utilized—the lowest amount

in a decade.) Region 8 also has the worst repaving cycle in the state. It takes 16 years on average for state roadways to be repaved here, while the repaving cycle is only 12 years in the rest of the state.

A 2024 report from TRIP, a national transportation research organization, concluded that poor road and bridge conditions cost motorists \$36.7 billion annually—up to \$3,600 per driver in some areas—due to vehicle damage, crashes and traffic: a veritable “pothole tax” that few families can afford. The report also notes that delaying repairs ends up increasing costs for state and local governments exponentially more.

**John T. Cooney, Jr., executive director of the Construction Industry Council of Westchester & Hudson Valley, Inc.**, said, “The Construction Industry Council of Westchester and Hudson Valley Inc., along with our partners in organized labor, thank our elected state legislators for their continuing and unwavering support of increased funding for our states’ roads and bridges. The \$800 million increase in the NYSDOT Core Program is necessary to fill the gap caused by unprecedented inflation of over 25% in construction costs since 2022. Additionally, our Hudson Valley Region represented by NYSDOT Region 8 has the worst road and bridge conditions of any region in the state. The motoring public and all residents of New York State deserve well maintained roads and bridges. Again, we thank Senator Harckham and Assemblymembers Burdick, Levenberg, Shimsky and Slater for their advocacy.”

Cooney added that the \$100 million of the \$800 million increase in the NYSDOT Core Program should be earmarked for Region 8 roads and bridges.

**Jeff Loughlin, business manager for the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 137**, said, “The need for funding to maintain the safety of our local roads has never been greater. Some of our roadways require constant repairs and annual paving. I agree with the New York Roadway and Infrastructure Coalition that our road and bridge assets are in such substantial decline that critical capital investments in our transportation infrastructure

need to be increased to offset inflationary costs to keep our residents safe and protect our economic interests. The Westchester Putnam Building and Construction Trades Council appreciates the efforts of Senator Harckham and other area legislators in securing jobs for our union tradeswomen and men.”

**State Senator Shelley B. Mayer** said, “I stand with my colleagues and the Construction Industry Council of Westchester and the Hudson Valley to fight for much-needed investment in transportation funding. It is critical that the executive budget, and the adopted final budget, include increased capital funding to address the decline of our roads and to ensure the safety of those who travel in New York. I have heard every day for years from constituents regarding the poor conditions of our roads, the dangers they pose, and the steep costs of vehicle repairs. NYSDOT Region 8, covering the lower Hudson Valley, has been underfunded for years and it is imperative that its funding is increased to the appropriate level. In doing so, the state will provide great jobs for union workers while working to keep passengers safe. We must do better to safeguard New Yorkers and all who travel in our State by investing in our roadways.”

**Assemblymember MaryJane Shimsky** said, “For years now, the overall road and bridge conditions in New York State have been deteriorating – and in the Hudson Valley, our roads and bridges have been falling apart at a faster rate than those in the State as a whole. Yet funding for road and bridge repairs in our region has been dropping precipitously. There are options for redirecting money so that Hudson Valley motorists will begin to get some relief from our terrible road conditions. I look forward to working with NYSDOT, the Governor’s Office, and my colleagues in the Legislature to fix our roads and bridges.”

**Assemblymember Dana Levenberg** said, “We are starting to see progress with projects such as the repaving of Route 9A, but we are fighting against time as the rest of the state roads in this area continue to deteriorate. My office could clear a forest by printing out every

complaint we receive about the state of the roads. Enough is enough! It makes no sense that our region, with the most lane miles and the neediest roads of all NYSDOT regions, does not get the most funding. This must change in this year's state budget."

**Assemblymember Chris Burdick** said, "Our state roads in the Hudson Valley have fallen into disrepair and at a faster pace than the state taken as a whole. The Hudson Valley's region of the NYS Department of Transportation - Region 8 - has the greatest number of lane miles and the greatest number of bridges of any region in the state, and yet the funding is not proportional. It is imperative that funding for Region 8 be substantially increased. The poor conditions of our roads impact not just commerce, convenience, and traveling comfort but more importantly safety for all motorists, including our first responders."

**Assemblymember Matt Slater** said, "The Hudson Valley has the worst-rated roads in New York State, despite residents paying some of the highest taxes in the country. This unacceptable reality not only puts drivers at risk but also hinders economic growth and quality of life. Albany must prioritize significant and sustained investment in our infrastructure to ensure safe, reliable, and drivable roads for all. It's time to deliver the resources our communities need to fix this long-standing issue and provide the quality infrastructure our region deserves."

**Cortlandt Town Supervisor Dr. Richard Becker** said, "Of the over 200 miles of roads within the Town of Cortlandt, many of the major thoroughfares are under the jurisdiction of New York State. These roads include Routes 6, 9 and 202. The Town Board of Cortlandt has endeavored to maintain and repave the roads under its control. However, we are reliant on the State to maintain these three major arteries. We are grateful to State Senator Peter Harckham for his efforts to make these major roads a priority for the State Department of Transportation, ensuring that they are routinely maintained and kept in optimum condition. In the coming months, as we drive around and notice the new improvements in our highway

infrastructure, we can all thank Sen. Harckham for his consistent strong support of our town.”

**Briarcliff Manor Mayor Steven Vescio** said, “The roadway infrastructure which serves as the lifeblood of the transportation network is severely outdated and in dire need of major capital investments in New York State Region 8. For far too long these needs have been swept aside, however we can wait no longer as these deficiencies limit our economic potential and endanger our safety. It’s time for New York State to make a meaningful capital reinvestment into these roadways and associated infrastructure. I strongly encourage immediate and bold action in the upcoming budget appropriations to remedy these conditions.”