



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dale M. Volker

Western New York Roads and Bridges Funding Gets Shortchanged in Order to Protect Mass Transit in New York City

DALE M. VOLKER May 6, 2009

Democratic Leadership Snubs Upstate/Western New York Roads and Bridges Programs Until October in Order to Pay for the Metropolitan Transit Authority's Operations

(ALBANY, NY) Senator Dale M. Volker (R-C-I, Depew) today voiced outrage regarding the democratic-controlled plan to bailout the New York City's mass transit system (Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), deficits, at the expense of funding for upstate roads and bridges programs.

"This is another example of the New York City Democrats treating upstate/western New York as an afterthought, using us as their personal ATM when they run into financial trouble," said Senator Dale M. Volker. "What is also troubling is that this backroom deal does not provide any funding for upstate roads and bridges that municipalities around western New York depend upon to ensure that proper roadway infrastructure improvements are developed and maintained. This is completely unfair for western New York taxpayers. Everyone should be outraged."

The MTA bailout plan that the Democratic leaders agreed to set a single rate for a payroll tax in all 12 counties served by the MTA — a tax of 34 cents for every \$100 of payroll. This payroll tax is strictly for the 12 county region serviced by the MTA and does not impact upstate and western New York companies, municipalities and school districts. School districts in this 12 county downstate region will be reimbursed for what they pay out in payroll taxes by the state, which will be dealt with in next year's budget, to the tune of an estimated \$97 million. **Upstaters and western New Yorkers will be paying for the MTA, passed-through their local school districts.**

“Bullet Aid,” which is supplemental school funding from the State of New York that assists needy school districts located mainly in upstate and western New York, is now going to be sent to downstate school districts financially impacted by this MTA bailout plan. Western New York school districts will now get very few of those “Bullet Aid” dollars for the foreseeable future. It's another financial hit to our western New York region and will negatively impact local school districts already struggling with their budgets.

Senator Volker said, “Instead of looking at the operational costs associated with the workings of the MTA and making the hard choices to get their financial ship in order, the Democratic leadership in the State Senate and State Assembly are simply taxing more, spending more and cutting less. This plan is simply putting a band-aid on a broken arm and upstate/western New York taxpayers are going to help pay the bill for this short-sided bailout plan, which takes away state funding to improve and maintain our roadways and bridges that we all depend upon.”

