



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Senator Kennedy Advances Fight for Increased Transportation Aid to Western New York

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY March 9, 2011

| ISSUE: [ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORTATION](#)

INCREASE TRANSPORTATION AID TO WESTERN NEW YORK

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Kennedy challenges current system as unfair to Western New Yorkers

ALBANY, N.Y. – Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, D-58th District, advanced his fight to secure increased transportation aid for Western New York, at the confirmation hearing for Joan McDonald, Governor Cuomo's appointee to take over the Department of Transportation.

When the DOT committed a human error in the calculation of the region's funding formula, they ended up shortchanging Western New York to the tune of approximately \$167 million.

Senator Kennedy, a member of the Transportation Committee, urged Commissioner McDonald to fix the funding disparity that Western New York has endured as a result of the miscalculation.

"Because of an Albany bureaucrat's miscalculation, Western New York lost out on \$167 million in infrastructure enhancement funding over the last two years. This human error now needs human correction. It's imperative that we rectify this disparity in funding," said Senator Kennedy, the ranking member on the Economic Development Committee.

"When economic multipliers are taken into consideration, it is estimated that the miscalculated formula has resulted in a loss of \$426 million in economic activity in Western New York. The impact of the \$167 million shortfall on local job creation is even more striking – Western New Yorkers missed out on the creation of approximately 2,672 jobs," he added. "Given these factors, it is essential that Western New York receive a significant increase in funding when the formulas are updated."

During his conversation with Commissioner McDonald, Senator Kennedy made it clear the transportation funding is critical not just for the economic future of Western New York but also to ensure the safety of the region's roads and bridges.

"According to the DOT, 35 percent of bridges in Erie County are considered 'structurally deficient.' In December, the Crown Point Bridge in Lake Champlain was demolished after being deemed unsafe due to a condition rating of 3.375. Western New York has 21 Bridges that have ratings worse than that of Crown Point, including 12 in Erie County," Senator Kennedy said. "Western New Yorkers deserve the jobs and roadway safety, which increased transportation aid would bring."

Senators George Maziarz, Michael Ranzenhofer and Catharine Young – also Western New York members of the Transportation Committee – joined Senator Kennedy in raising concerns about the funding disparity that the region’s roads and bridges have suffered.

At a budget hearing last week, Senator Kennedy launched his push for increased transportation aid when he [questioned Deputy Executive Commissioner Stanley Gee](#) about the funding disparity and miscalculated allocation formulas. Following the hearing, the senator [sent a letter to Commissioner McDonald](#) requesting that the DOT repair the human error and rectify the disproportional funding allotment.

Senator Kennedy said he is committed to working with the new commissioner to secure a fair share of funding for Western New York. Through the efforts of Senator Kennedy’s office, the Western New York Delegation is advancing the push for increased transportation aid to the next steps.

[Click here to see video of Senator Kennedy laying out the facts at Commissioner McDonald's confirmation hearing.](#)