



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Kennedy Calls for Senate Transportation Hearing on Future of the Buffalo Skyway

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY October 10, 2012

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With the DOT planning to spend over \$110M in maintenance, Kennedy calls for hearing to ensure plan considers long-term best interest of Buffalo

Kennedy says removal of Skyway will provide economic boost to Buffalo and cost savings for taxpayers; calls for hearing to examine DOT's future plans

Kennedy: Skyway's Sky-high Maintenance Costs Make it a Bad Investment

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy, member of the Senate Transportation Committee and an outspoken advocate for removal of the Buffalo Skyway, today called on the Senate Transportation Committee to hold a hearing on the New York State Department of Transportation's (DOT) future plans for the Buffalo Skyway. A 2008 DOT report revealed that current maintenance of the structure will cost the state approximately \$117 million over the next 20 years, while removal costs total about \$20 to \$25 million. Senator Kennedy wants a hearing on the subject so that the DOT can explain the rationale behind their Skyway plans.

“We have a rare situation when it comes to the Skyway – the best option is also the least expensive option” said Senator Kennedy. “We need to ensure that the State gets the best bang for their buck when it comes to spending taxpayer funds, and I don’t believe maintaining the current condition of the Skyway is the best use of public resources. Taking down the skyway is a win-win: it's good for our community, and it saves money.”

Given recent investments at Ohio Street and Fuhrmann Boulevard and the planning underway for the Buffalo Harbor Bridge, Senator Kennedy believes that the time is ripe for discussion on the future of the Buffalo Skyway. In his letter to Senator Charles Fuschillo, the chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, Kennedy points out that the DOT currently gives the Skyway a safety rating of 4.85, meaning that it is “structurally deficient.” A 2012 DOT report on state bridge conditions notes that the Federal Highway Administration rates the bridge “functionally obsolete.” Kennedy believes a committee hearing is needed to ensure that the DOT is spending taxpayer dollars wisely.

Senator Kennedy’s request for a hearing comes after [last week’s DOT discussions on the removal of the portion of I-81 that cuts through downtown Syracuse](#). DOT Commissioner Joan McDonald expressed excitement about the project, agreeing to explore the economic impact of bringing the viaduct down. Senator Kennedy believes the same logic should be

applied to the Buffalo Skyway.

The Buffalo Skyway, constructed in 1956, cuts through downtown Buffalo, obstructing views of the waterfront, as well as making it more difficult for residents to reach the water's edge. Proposals to remove the structure would not only yield a cost savings to the state, but could also spur private investment and economic growth along Buffalo's Outer Harbor.

Kennedy requested that a hearing take place ahead of discussions regarding the 2013-14 State Budget.

[Click here to read Senator Kennedy's letter to Senator Fuschillo requesting a Transportation Committee Hearing on the future of the Buffalo Skyway.](#)

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Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 58th District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, Eden, Hamburg and West Seneca, the city of Lackawanna and parts of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at kennedy.nysenate.gov.