



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

## Senator Fuschillo: State Budget Should Increase Highway Funds for Local Government

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. February 15, 2013

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### ***Increase Would be the First Since 2008 & Help Provide Relief to Municipalities***

Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick), Chairman of the Senate's Transportation Committee, today called for an increase in highway funding to local governments as part of the 2013-14 state budget.

"Local governments are responsible for maintaining 87 percent of the roads and 50 percent of the bridges in New York State, but the Executive budget proposal would freeze their state highway funding for the fifth consecutive year. Last year, the State significantly increased transportation capital funding through the New York Works Program to help create jobs, promote economic development, and improve our infrastructure. This was an important investment, but none of that funding benefitted localities. Increasing local infrastructure investment will provide those same benefits while providing relief to municipalities. That needs to happen as part of this year's state budget," said Senator Fuschillo.

Statewide highway funding for local governments through the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs) and Marchiselli funding program has been frozen at a total of \$402.8 million in the last four state budgets and is proposed to be frozen again as part of the Executive's budget proposal.

However, both the need and costs for infrastructure projects have continued to rise. In its recently released "Cracks in the Foundation" report, the State Comptroller's Office estimated \$89 billion in unmet infrastructure needs over the next 20 years, with much of this shortfall on the already deteriorating local transportation system. The same report notes that over the last ten years, fuel costs have increased by 190%, asphalt costs have grown by 206%, and material costs for highway and road construction have increased by over 57%.

"On behalf of our organization's more than 900 elected and appointed transportation professionals, who maintain over half of the state's roads, we strongly support Senator Fuschillo's efforts to increase local highway funding," said William Weller, Highway Superintendent for the Town of Florida and President of the NYS Association of Town Highway Superintendents of Highways (NYSAOTSOH). Superintendent Weller also noted that a 2007 study conducted by NYSAOTSOH reported New York State needs to invest an additional \$1.2 billion per year on local roads and bridges to prevent them from becoming deficient.

"We appreciate the strong support of Chairman Fuschillo for providing the necessary level of funding for these local transportation infrastructure investments especially at a time when local highway departments are facing substantial losses in federal highway aid as a result of the new federal

transportation program, MAP-21," said William Wright, President of the New York State County Highway Superintendents Association and Ontario County Highway Superintendent. "The Senator and many of his colleagues have long recognized the broad challenges county highway departments face in fixing and preserving their vast local systems of roads and bridges, much of which is over 50 years old and suffering from a lack of funding. We're glad we have them as partners and are hopeful that the final state budget will reflect these critical needs."

"Having a modern system of roads and bridges in New York State must be a priority for elected state leaders," said Stephen Acquario, New York State Association of Counties Executive Director. "Increasing investment in our local transportation infrastructure will ensure the continued safety of the motoring public and position New York to be a more competitive state for economic development and job creation. We appreciate the support of Chairman Fuschillo and many other legislators."