



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Senator Kennedy: \$3 Million for NFTA Capital Projects is Needed Boost

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY March 28, 2013

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*Kennedy says New York State will direct more than \$3 million in capital assistance to Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority.*

*Kennedy: This \$3 million state investment to support NFTA capital projects is a much-needed and welcome boost for WNY's public transit system.*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy, D-Buffalo, announced New York State will invest more than \$3 million to support capital improvements to the public transportation systems administered by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA). Kennedy said this state investment will help the NFTA restore and improve its transit operations while providing some relief to help prevent any further route cuts or fare hikes.

“This \$3 million state investment to support NFTA capital projects is a much-needed and welcome boost for Western New York’s public transit system,” Kennedy said. “It will allow the NFTA to complete important capital projects while helping them to preserve operating funds to maintain routes and services for transit riders. By targeting funds to our public transportation systems, we will also help spur continued private-sector development and economic growth along NFTA rail lines and bus routes.”

This is the first time in several years that the state is releasing funds from the non-MTA account of the state's Dedicated Mass Transportation Trust Fund. For the previous six years, resources from this dedicated fund have not been distributed to finance improvement projects for aging upstate transit systems. As a result, over \$100 million dollars in state funding for capital projects has not been disbursed. The NFTA and other upstate transit agencies have had to dip into their operating funds to pay for needed capital improvements. Kennedy says that this often leads to route cuts and fare hikes for local transit riders.

"This is an important step in the right direction, but the NFTA is still owed millions more in capital funds from the state's Dedicated Mass Transportation Trust Fund. I'm pleased the state is finally taking steps to release some of these critical funds, and I plan to keep pressuring the DOT to ensure resources for mass transit capital projects are released in full and in a more timely manner. Funding capital improvements will help create jobs and make our transit systems even more attractive to new riders."

At a public hearing held earlier this year to discuss the state's transportation budget, Kennedy pressed the commissioner of the state Department of Transportation to get her agency to start releasing capital funds for the NFTA from the non-MTA account of the state's Dedicated Mass Transportation Fund.

The NFTA will receive \$2,310,923 in state capital grants and \$722,164 in NY Works Capital Assistance, for a total of \$3,033,887 to finance capital projects. In addition to the \$3 million for NFTA capital assistance, the state budget sends \$44,926,600 in State Transit Operating Assistance (STOA) to the NFTA.

Kennedy also wants the state to explore reforming its funding formulas for upstate transit agencies. While the state maintained its operating assistance for NFTA this year, Kennedy feels the local transit authority still receives less than its fair share of state aid. He intends to

continue to push the state DOT for action to fulfill this important need for Western New York.

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*To view video of Senator Kennedy questioning the DOT commissioner on state resources for the NFTA, visit <http://youtu.be/PIU9RWvmtHo>.*

*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 63rd District, which is comprised of the town of Cheektowaga, the city of Lackawanna and nearly all of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.*