



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## Helping First Responders Afford Needed Equipment

JAMES L. SEWARD June 5, 2013

| ISSUE: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HOMELAND SECURITY, FIREFIGHTERS, PARAMEDICS, EMERGENCY SERVICES OR FEMA**

**ALBANY, 06/05/13** -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) today announced final legislative approval of a bill he sponsored to increase the amounts of allowable loans under the emergency services loan fund. Senator Seward's bill (S.3728B) will adjust the loan rates available to account for inflation and help departments with equipment purchases and other necessary upgrades.

**“Our first responders need to be outfitted with the proper equipment to help them safely do their job – saving lives and protecting our communities,”** said Senator Seward. **“Emergency equipment costs, like everything else, continue to rise, and it is essential that this successful program evolves to meet the changing needs of our fire and rescue squads.”**

Seward was the author of legislation in the 1990s creating the state emergency services revolving loan fund, which has awarded 439 loans worth more than \$53 million since 1995 to fire and ambulance companies, municipalities and fire districts for equipment and capital improvements. The loans are repaid, with payments being recycled into new loans for eligible fire companies and districts.

In 2004, the size of the fund was expanded and new maximum loan amounts were established. The Seward legislation will again boost loan parameters. For example, the

allowable loan amount for the purchase of protective or communication equipment will increase from \$100,000 to \$200,000, while the allowable loan amount for the purchase of an ambulance or rescue vehicle will rise from \$150,000 to \$225,000.

**"The program has provided tremendous benefits particularly to our rural departments that would be unable to repair their firehouses, purchase rescue vehicles, or upgrade communication equipment without the much needed funds. The loan program also helps local governments keep property taxes in check,"** Seward added.

The program is financed by repayments to the fund, budget authority and a 911 surcharge on wireless telephone calls. Additional information is available online at the [Office of Fire Prevention and Control website](#) or by calling 518-474-6746.