



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

New Parameters For Emergency Services Loan Fund

JAMES L. SEWARD October 22, 2013

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

ALBANY, 10/22/13 – A highly successful state loan program to assist first responders is changing with the times under legislation (S.3728B) signed into law today. The legislation was sponsored by Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) and increases the amounts of allowable loans under the emergency services loan fund.

“Our first responders put their lives on the line every time they answer an emergency call and need to be outfitted with the latest safety gear,” said Senator Seward. **“Emergency equipment costs, like everything else, continue to rise, and it is essential that this successful loan 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 again boosts loan parameters to account for inflation and help departments with equipment purchases and other necessary upgrades. 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. Fire and EMS officials who are interested in the program may contact the Office of Fire Prevention and Control at 518-474-6746 or online at <http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/ofpc/services/loan>.