



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Senate Renews Bill To Aid Public Libraries

JAMES L. SEWARD February 26, 2014

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ALBANY, 02/26/14 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I- Oneonta) today announced senate approval of legislation he co-sponsors, extending a 2011 law to ensure the neediest public libraries can access and utilize special construction grants from the state.

Senate bill 6329 extends to March 31, 2020 key provisions of the public library construction grant program that were scheduled to sunset in 2015.

“Our libraries are hubs for countless activities and are vital to our communities, especially in these tough economic times,” said Senator Seward. **“Libraries are also some of the most historic landmarks we have and many are in need of repairs and upgrades to ensure their future viability and accessibility.”**

The 2011 law made two important changes to better address the needs of libraries:

- Authorizes libraries in “economically disadvantaged communities” to use grant funds for up to 75 percent of project costs, instead of the previous 50 percent;
- Permits libraries to use state matching funds for the acquisition of vacant lands.

“Communities should take ownership in library upgrades and share the cost to the extent possible. This law ensures that the local buy-in isn’t too steep for those most in need,” Seward added.

Steven J. Bachman, Four County Library System executive director said, “This legislation clears the way for many libraries to access these critical grant funds. We thank Senator Seward for his continued support of our local libraries.”

Senator Seward, a long-time advocate for libraries, is a member of the Senate Select Committee on Libraries and has consistently received top marks from the New Yorkers for Better Libraries PAC. He has helped direct state funding to a number of libraries within the 51st senate district.

“Along with traditional book lending and research opportunities, our libraries help job seekers who come to use the Internet to search for employment or refresh their resumes. Many others stop by to research their family trees or simply enjoy some quiet time with a good book. Assisting libraries with state funds takes the burden off local taxpayers, while preserving and improving these valuable resources for generations to come,” Seward concluded.

Companion legislation, A.8732, has been introduced in the state assembly.