

NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Senator Kennedy Announces Final Budget Increases Local Road Funds to Support Pothole Repair, Strengthen Infrastructure

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY March 31, 2014

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Senator Kennedy pushed for increased funding for local highways after harsh winter left many roads in rough shape.

State budget to include a \$40 million increase for the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program as an “Extreme Winter Recovery” appropriation.

ALBANY, N.Y. – Following a forceful push from Senator Tim Kennedy, D-Buffalo, New York State will increase funding for local roads after this harsh winter left many streets in rough shape. Kennedy announced the final state budget will include a \$40 million increase for the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS), which provides communities with funds to repair and rebuild local roads and bridges. This \$40 million appropriation will serve as an Extreme Winter Recovery fund.

With this year's devastating winter taking a toll on roads and municipal budgets, Kennedy called on the Governor and his legislative colleagues to agree to a significant boost in CHIPS funding to ensure communities have sufficient resources to combat the consequences of this winter and enhance their road-improvement plans to strengthen local highways and bridges for the future.

“After enduring one of the harshest winters in recent memory, Western New York’s towns, cities and villages are now rushing to repair roads and fix potholes, while grappling with strained municipal budgets. This urgently-needed funding for extreme winter recovery will provide our communities with necessary support to help reconstruct local roads,” said Senator Tim Kennedy. “Thankfully, the state has heeded our call for increased funding to assist local towns and cities struggling under this winter’s heavy costs. These funds will bolster efforts to repair pothole-riddled roads and strengthen our aging infrastructure for the long-term.”

This winter has buried Western New York under a total snowfall of close to 130 inches, well above seasonal averages, while forcing the region to endure an unprecedented two blizzards in three months. Snow removal costs have surged, and roads have suffered.

Over the course of this winter, the Town of Cheektowaga has had to spend more than \$480,250 on road salt alone. In Lackawanna, the total cost of cold-patch materials, which provide a temporary fix for potholes, has doubled compared to last year. The Lackawanna Department of Public Works has spent over \$12,000 on cold-patch this winter, while they only had to use about \$6,000 worth of cold patch last year.

After hearing from municipal leaders that this year’s winter was stretching their budgets near the breaking point, Kennedy worked with colleagues in the State Capitol to secure additional funding to reconstruct local roads and provide fiscal relief.

Last year, CHIPS funding was increased for the first time in five years. This year, CHIPS funding was proposed to remain flat until Kennedy launched his push to boost funds to support communities’ efforts to fix potholes and rebuild local roads. Now local governments will have access to \$40 million more to support their winter-recovery and infrastructure-rebuilding programs.

“With massive potholes, the reminders of the severity of this winter, scattered all across our roadways, this increased funding for local roads will serve as welcome relief for Western New York communities,” Kennedy said.

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