



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Senator Young, Local Highway Superintendents Urge Greater Funding for Roads and Bridges

CATHARINE YOUNG March 5, 2015

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*Call for a five-year dedicated fund and greater support for the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program*

ALBANY – “Local Roads Matter” was the call to action voiced by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- Olean) and local Highway Superintendents during yesterday’s rally at the state

Capitol.

The elected officials joined together to call for a \$160 million increase to the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) and the restoration of \$40 million for the Winter Recovery funds, bringing the total CHIPS funding in this year's state budget to \$638.1 million. They also called for the creation of a new, five-year \$500 million (\$100 million per year) dedicated fund for roads and bridges, carved from the \$5.4 billion settlement funds the state recently received, to bring relief to local governments and taxpayers.

"The governor has proposed a billion dollars for the Tappan Zee Bridge from the settlement fund, but he has provided no settlement funding for our roads and bridges upstate. That's simply wrong," said Senator Young. "Our local highway departments are responsible for 87 percent of the state's roadways and they continue to struggle after changes to the federal transportation program and the loss of federal highway aid.

"Today, 32 percent of bridges are deficient and 40 percent of roads have pavement rated as fair, poor or getting worse. If we do not make a conscious effort to provide the funding towns need, the cost is going to be insurmountable for the local taxpayers. New York's tax burden is already tremendous and dedicating \$500 million from the bank settlement funds to local roads and bridges would provide the funding needed without raising state spending."

In a letter to the governor and legislative leaders, Senator Young and her colleagues urged a stronger commitment to the locally maintained transportation infrastructure. Citing a 25 percent increase in statewide salt contract prices and the recent loss of as much as 40 percent of federal highway aid, the legislators highlighted state funding for local roads as a way to spur economic development and reduced property taxes. The legislators also included a \$500 million dedicated fund, distributed through the CHIPS formula, as the way to ensure equitable aid to highway departments across the state.

“With the addition of the settlement funds available this year, we have an unprecedented opportunity to invest in our local roads without raising state spending or increasing the local tax burden. Repaired and resurfaced roads and bridges mean safer commutes, economic development and job creation across the state,” Senator Young said.