



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Ortt Passes Bill That Keeps NFTA Funds From Being Diverted

ROBERT G. ORTT June 15, 2015

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### *Bill is Now Passed in Both Houses of the State Legislature*

State Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I – North Tonawanda) today passed a bill that would ensure money allotted for the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) goes directly to the NFTA. The legislation (S4523A) has now passed in both houses of the state legislature. Funds dedicated to the NFTA often get diverted from its general fund to the state for governmental purposes. This bill would prohibit that diversion.

“I’ve prioritized infrastructure investments, because that’s the key to creating jobs and growing the economy,” said **Senator Ortt**. “The NFTA is the backbone of our local infrastructure and plays a crucial role in our region’s industrial, commercial, and residential development. With the structural and fiscal challenges facing the NFTA, they need a reliable funding stream. I was pleased to work with my Assembly colleagues in a bi-partisan fashion and we now need the Governor to sign this into law. NFTA revenue should be reinvested in our local infrastructure – to move goods and workers and to attract tourists and jobs – not swept to the state general fund.”

According to the NFTA, the Metro carries about 94,000 people a day, has 1,119 full time and part-time employees, and utilizes 332 buses, 27 rail cars, 35 vans and four trolley-buses.

Decreased ridership, among other factors beyond the NFTA's control, has caused the Authority to operate under many fiscal challenges. The economic decline significantly decreased the NFTA's annual State Transit Operating Assistance (STOA). Meanwhile, other factors have adversely impacted the NFTA, such as rising health care insurance and workers compensation costs, as well as drops in fees collected from mortgage recording taxes.

**NFTA Executive Director Kimberley Minkel** said, "The NFTA relies on dedicated New York State funding for transit in the same way the residents of Erie and Niagara counties rely on the NFTA every day to get to work, school or medical appointments. This bill recognizes the importance of protecting every dollar that is dedicated to support those services."

The bill will be sent to Governor for final approval. Once the bill becomes law, it would take effect immediately.