



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Senator Young Shines Spotlight On Route 219 Funding During Transportation Budget Hearing

CATHARINE YOUNG January 20, 2016

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ALBANY - Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- Olean) seized the opportunity in her new role as Senate Finance Chair to push for progress on completing U. S. Route 219, a binational 1,500 mile interstate connecting Toronto to Miami that goes through the heart of Buffalo and Cattaraugus County to the Pennsylvania border, during Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Matthew Driscoll's testimony today before the state legislature's budget hearing regarding Governor Cuomo's executive proposal.

The project, which is enthusiastically supported by a large coalition of Western New York and international business, community, labor, and government leaders, has been stalled since the opening of 4.2 miles from NY 39 to Peters Road in Ashford that included the roadway's twin bridge spanning the Zoar Valley Gorge on November 19, 2010.

The recent passage of the federal Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act presents a new opportunity for the state to designate Route 219 as eligible for a share of the \$16 billion in highway and bridge funding that has been set aside for New York State.

Continental 1, a non-profit group, has been working with New York and Pennsylvania leaders to advocate for completion. Twenty miles are left to be done in Cattaraugus County, and

officials hope the next segment for construction will be Section 12, a two-mile stretch between Interstate 86 and north of Salamanca. Other states have been advancing the highway, most recently with Maryland approving funds for a 2.5 mile connection, and Pennsylvania entering a study phase for portions of its 200 miles.

Section 12 crosses Seneca Nation of Indians territory and Senator Young advocated that the state work closely with them to advance the project.

Senator Young said that Route 219 is an issue that has been going on for many years, decades as a matter of fact, and that until 2010 the state was making great progress.

“This project will open up new opportunities for Western New York as far as trade, as far as commerce, logistics, and it would provide many, many, many good paying construction jobs. It would only add and enhance what the governor has tried to do for Western New York,” Senator Young said.

“This would provide us with a strategic placement on the map, really put Western New York on the map. As we continue to grow our economy and grow manufacturing jobs this would be enormous for Western New York,” she said.

Senator Young has said she will continue to work with stakeholders and federal officials, including U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer and Congressman Tom Reed, to secure federal FAST Act funds.

Video of Senator Young full remarks regarding funding for Route 219 during today’s budget hearing can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXJREudLoS4>.