



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Seward Joins Highway Supers to Call for More State Funding for Local Roads, Bridges

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ALBANY, 03/09/16 -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) today joined a bipartisan group of state legislators along with county and town highway superintendents from across the state to call for increased state funding for local highway improvements.

“Quality roads and bridges are indispensable when it comes to improving our economy and making sure the motoring public is safe,” said Senator Seward. **“I represent all or part of nine counties and travel our local highways regularly and I know as well as anyone that improvements are**

needed. This year, the governor has budgeted \$26 billion for the downstate MTA Capital Plan, but only \$20 billion for the rest of the state. Parity is needed and that means more funding must be directed to upstate needs – starting with our infrastructure.

“Local roads, bridges, and culverts are the foundation of our state’s infrastructure and the numbers bear that out. Every time you leave your house, chances are high that you are doing most of your traveling on a local road maintained by dedicated county, town, and village transportation workers. Motorist safety and economic vitality depend on the condition of these roads and the state must step up and fund this key component of our infrastructure.”

Local roads and bridges account for 87 percent of the roads, 52 percent of the bridges, and 48 percent of the vehicle mileage logged in New York State.

In a letter to Governor Cuomo and legislative leaders, Senator Seward and his senate and assembly colleagues called for:

- A \$250 million increase in Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs) funding in the 2016-17 budget which would bring total state aid to \$688.1 million;
- Creation of a four-year, \$600 million (\$150 million per year) “State Aid to Local Bridge and Culvert Program” to be distributed fairly and regionally with local control to meet unmet needs.

Both of these proposals will be included in the senate’s one-house budget which will be acted on next week.

“One of the keys to attracting new employers to New York state is to make sure our infrastructure is ready to accommodate growth and we need to start with our local highways. By improving our long neglected highways and bridges we will be able to grow jobs across the state,” Seward added.