



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Commitment For The Route 219 SEIS Is A Victory For Jobs and Economic Growth

CATHARINE YOUNG July 7, 2016

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ALBANY – Calling it a triumph for Cattaraugus County and Western New York, Senator Catharine Young said that the state Senate has secured a commitment from the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to commence the environmental study necessary to restart work on U.S. Route 219.

The Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for Route 219 will be included in the state's five-year transportation capital plan. The Senate has worked closely with NYSDOT and the Governor on establishing this agreement, which has the potential to bring jobs and economic opportunity to our region, according to Senator Young.

“Progress on Route 219 has been stalled since November of 2010, when we opened the Section 5 expressway and high-level bridge that spans Cattaraugus Creek in the town of Ashford. As Senate Finance Chair, I pushed for the environmental study to be included in the current five year road and bridge plan, and the resulting agreement is an enormous step forward. We give our sincere thanks to Governor Cuomo and NYSDOT Commissioner Matthew Driscoll for working with the Senate, listening to the people and addressing the economic needs of Western New York,” Senator Young said.

The roadway runs south from the heart of Buffalo to northern Cattaraugus County as a four-lane expressway, and turns into a two-lane highway to the Pennsylvania line. The vision of turning Route 219 into a major international trade route from Toronto, Canada, to Florida has been a priority for many, and other states such as Maryland and Pennsylvania have made progress while New York has lagged, according to Senator Young.

Assemblyman Joe Giglio applauded the environmental study as a step towards improving the area's future.

"It is such great news it almost leaves your speechless. It is what we've been striving for, and finally having movement after six long years is phenomenal for the entire region," he said.

According to Senator Young, "Completing Route 219 has been a huge priority for Cattaraugus County for decades because of the job growth and economic potential that would result. In 1998, the state announced that Route 219 would become a four-lane highway from Springville to the I-86 Southern Tier Expressway, because a study found that up to 28,700 permanent jobs would be generated. The project was expanded via Continental One, a group which is working with multiple states to complete the entire route."

"Building the expressway would put people back to work in good-paying jobs and help Western New York be more competitive in economic development. It will enhance tourism and bring more visitors to our region to enjoy our recreational assets such as Allegany State Park, ski and golf resorts, area wineries and other attractions, bringing more prosperity to the Southern Tier," she said.

"It also would make it safer for the traveling public. It is a roadway that is heavily used by cars and big trucks. There have been accidents and fatalities on the existing two-lane, and my office has received multiple concerns over the years," Senator Young said.

“Local leaders, manufacturers, small businesses, labor, academic institutions, healthcare organizations and trade groups all agree that Route 219 must be completed to put Cattaraugus County on the map,” Senator Young said.