



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Buffalo Billion for a Buffalo Icon: Kennedy Calls for \$5 Million of Buffalo Billion II to Support Stabilization Work at Central Terminal

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY December 18, 2017

| ISSUE: **INFRASTRUCTURE, BUFFALO BILLION, BUFFALO**

Kennedy: Give Queen City Landmark its Fair Share of Buffalo Billion II to Help Stabilize and Preserve Historic Train Station and Make Site Development-Ready

All-Volunteer Central Terminal Restoration Corp. Needs Public Support to Stabilize Building, Hire Support Staff

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo), a strong supporter of the \$400 million Buffalo Billion II program, stood today at the Buffalo Central Terminal to call for \$5 million of the program's funding to go to the Central Terminal Restoration Corporation (CTRC), an all-volunteer non-profit organization dedicated to the stabilization and preservation of the Central Terminal. In a letter to the Governor, Kennedy says the majority of this funding would be used towards capital improvements that will help weatherize and stabilize the iconic structure, with the small remaining portion assisting the CTRC in hiring an executive director and support staff, as recommended by the Urban Land Institute. As interest in restoring the Central Terminal has increased, so too has the danger of weather infiltration. This \$5 million would give the CTRC the resources they need to prevent further deterioration, while making the site even more appealing to potential development partners.

"The Central Terminal Restoration Corporation has done a yeoman's job over the past two decades to shore up this architectural gem," said Senator Kennedy. "With \$400 million earmarked for economic development in the City of Buffalo in the form of the Buffalo Billion II, it only makes sense that a portion of this funding should go towards supporting the stabilization and eventual reuse of one of the most important sites in the Broadway-Fillmore community. In addition to stabilizing the structure, it is critical that the CTRC is provided with the resources it needs to fulfill the recommendations of the Urban Land Institute, including the hiring of an executive director."

"For twenty years, the CTRC has overseen the protection and restoration of the Buffalo Central Terminal," said Paul Lang, Vice Chair. "With grants and support from private donors, Assemblymember Crystal Peoples-Stokes, Mayor Byron Brown and the City of Buffalo, and one just recently awarded by Empire State Development, we have been able to make important accomplishments. However, a project of this size requires significant investment, and it is a challenge that the CTRC is ready to take on. We thank Senator Kennedy for advocating for this funding, and should the state see fit to award it, stand ready to rise to the challenge."

"We know from our advocacy for the Central Terminal that the people of Western New York are deeply passionate about reviving the Central Terminal for the good it will do for the building, the East Side and Western New York's unique historic identity," said Congressman Brian Higgins. "The Central Terminal is a community and national landmark worth fighting for. We fully support Senator Kennedy's efforts to make the Central Terminal a priority project and request funding to put this iconic piece of Western New York's fabric on a path to restoration and revitalization."

"I'm very proud of the responsibility and stewardship that the Central Terminal Restoration Corporation has undertaken in preserving one of Buffalo's remaining iconic structures still

awaiting redevelopment. Earlier this year I secured \$250,000 for capital improvements to the facility and I now look forward to helping Senator Kennedy advocate for more resources, for the Central Terminal," said Assemblywoman Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes.

Fillmore District Councilman David Franczyk said, "It is gratifying to see New York State follow up on the Common Council resolution to earmark much needed funding for one of Buffalo's premier projects, The Central Terminal."

Kennedy's proposal calls for \$4.5 million to be used solely for capital expenses, including design and construction. The remaining \$500,000 would be used to hire an executive director and a small support team.

Earlier this year, the restoration and reuse of the Central Terminal garnered community attention when it was considered as a potential site to replace the aging and inadequate Amtrak station on Exchange Street. While the site, which Kennedy supported, was ultimately passed over in favor of a new building near the existing station, it underscored the importance of finding a new and long-term use for the site. Mayor Byron Brown and Governor Andrew M. Cuomo provided funds for a study conducted by the Urban Land Institute. One of the Institute's recommendations included the hiring of an executive director who can oversee the day-to-day operations of the organization and the site. By providing initial seed funding for support staff costs, the CTRC will have the resources and stability it needs to continue its mission, and to bring in private dollars.

The text of Kennedy's letter to Governor Cuomo is below:

December 18, 2017

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo

Governor of New York State

Executive Chamber

New York State Capitol

Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

With another winter's freeze/thaw cycle impacting the Buffalo Central Terminal, I write to request that \$5 million from the Buffalo Billion Part II be allocated to the Central Terminal Restoration Corporation (CTRC), a 501(c)(3) organization that is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the Buffalo Central Terminal. Such funding will support the weatherization and stabilization of this historic site, as well as allowing the CTRC to implement the Urban Land Institute's recommendation of professionalizing the organization by hiring an executive director and other staff. The Buffalo Billion Part II was the much-needed follow-up to the original Buffalo Billion, and I was proud to support it. Your attention to Buffalo has been unprecedented, and I thank you for proposing the Buffalo Billion and its follow-up.

I have had the pleasure of visiting this site several times over the years. While the structure, nearing 90 years in age, never fails to impress, the unending freeze/thaw cycles of Buffalo winters have continued to take their noticeable toll on the building. At the same time, public interest is undeniably increasing. From regional festivals, to filming, to private events, more and more Western New Yorkers are eager to spend time at the Buffalo Central Terminal, and

to see this incredible building restored to its former glory. But time is of the essence. While the CTRC has done an impressive job of securing the site from vandals and illegal entry, the building is undeniably vulnerable to the elements. Windows are broken, masonry is crumbling, and prospects at fully utilizing the main concourse year-round are limited.

A \$5 million injection of funds from the Buffalo Billion Part II would be the shot in the arm that the CTRC and the Central Terminal needs. With \$4.5 million dedicated towards capital expenditures, and the remaining \$500,000 towards staff, the CTRC would be put in a prime position to get this site stabilized and development-ready, while also professionalizing their organization. An executive director, development director, and other staff would be able to give this site the full-time attention it deserves. The current all-volunteer team has done more than could possibly be asked or expected, and they have saved this site for the next generation of Buffalonians. Now is the time for the state to step in with the resources that only it can provide, and allow the CTRC and the Central Terminal to take the next necessary steps to save and reuse one of the most important structures in the city.

The Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood has a diverse and storied history. While the community has suffered from years of economic distress, it remains strong and tight-knit. Wherever you stand in Broadway-Fillmore, the iconic tower of the Central Terminal can be seen. With this landmark dominating the neighborhood, it is logical that its reuse and revitalization will play a key role in creating new economic opportunities for local businesses and residents.

Again, I respectfully request that \$5 million from the Buffalo Billion Part II be allocated to the Central Terminal Restoration Corporation to facilitate weatherization and stabilization work at the Buffalo Central Terminal, and to allow the organization to hire full-time staff.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to continuing to work with you to advance the economic well-being of Buffalo and Western New York. Should you have any questions, as always, I welcome your call.

Sincerely,

Timothy M. Kennedy

New York State Senator, 63rd District

Cc: Howard Zemsky, President & CEO - Empire State Development Corp.

###