



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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O'Mara and Palmesano pledge to continue fight for greater state support for local roads and bridges: Urge Cuomo to prioritize local transportation infrastructure in his call for a new \$150-billion infrastructure plan

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| ISSUE: **LOCAL ROADS BRIDGES TRANSPORTATION**



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**Corning, N.Y., December 19**—State Senator Tom O’Mara (R,C,I- Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) today called on Governor Andrew Cuomo to “once and for all make New York State’s commitment to local roads and bridges the strongest state-level commitment in the nation.”

The area legislators were responding to Governor Cuomo’s proposal to launch a new \$150-billion infrastructure plan next year. The governor unveiled the infrastructure proposal in a **speech earlier this week during which he outlined his 2019 legislative agenda.**

In a joint statement, O’Mara and Palmesano said, “Beginning in 2013, the state’s recognition of the importance of CHIPS and parity in statewide transportation funding continues to make a significant difference for our local governments, local economies, local property taxpayers, and motorist safety locally and statewide. We hope that Governor Cuomo’s proposal for a broad new infrastructure improvement plan will be led in 2019 by action to once and for all make New York State’s commitment to local roads and bridges the strongest state-level commitment in the nation. The improvement and upkeep of local transportation infrastructure is a wise use of taxpayer dollars. Every additional dollar of state support means a dollar less that our local property taxpayers have to pay. It’s also an important investment in economic growth and job creation throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and all across New York.”

Over the past several years, O’Mara and Palmesano have joined local highway superintendents and other local officials from throughout New York State to lead the fight in the Legislature for fairer and stronger state support for local transportation infrastructure. It has been a growing, bipartisan effort since 2013. **Earlier this year O’Mara and Palmesano organized a bipartisan group of 142 senators and members of the Assembly, nearly 70% of the entire Legislature, who joined county and town highway superintendents and work crews, and other local leaders from throughout the state to call for support for local roads and bridges.** They noted that local roads and bridges account for 87% of the roads, 52% of the

bridges, and 48% of the vehicle mileage logged in New York State.

The 2018-19 budget provided \$438 million in base funding for the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS). The Legislature also restored a \$65-million “**Extreme Winter Recovery**” allocation. Beginning with the 2013-14 state budget, CHIPS funding has increased by more than \$200 million, or upwards of 40%. A new PAVE-NY program also provides additional funding for local roads. A new **BRIDGE-NY program** is providing aid for local bridge and culvert projects.

Combined, these programs provide significant funding increases for counties, cities, towns, and villages. Regionally, for example, total aid percentage increases from 2013 to this year have ranged from 45% to 55%.

However, the ongoing need remains undeniable: the state comptroller, for example, estimates that repairing locally owned bridges alone throughout New York State will cost upwards of \$28 billion.