



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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O'Mara and Palmesano renew pledge to fight for greater state support for local roads and bridges

THOMAS F. O'MARA January 14, 2019

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Albany, N.Y., January 14—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I- Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) today renewed their call for 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 have been responding to Cuomo's proposal to launch a new \$150-billion infrastructure plan in 2019. The governor first unveiled the infrastructure proposal in a **speech last December during which he outlined his 2019 legislative agenda.**

Details of the new infrastructure plan could emerge in Albany on Tuesday when Cuomo delivers his ninth State of the State message to the Legislature and, at the same time, unveils his 2019-2020 proposed state budget.

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 has continued 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.