



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Regional state lawmakers welcome NY's go-ahead on local road and bridge work: Prolonged slowdown would have severe economic consequences and lead to job losses

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 11, 2020

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Since 2013, O'Mara, Palmesano, Friend and many of their legislative colleagues have joined county and town highway superintendents and other local transportation leaders from throughout New York to promote a stronger state commitment to local transportation infrastructure through the "Local Roads Matter" advocacy campaign.

Elmira, N.Y., June 10—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning), and Assemblyman Chris Friend (R,C,I-Big Flats) today welcomed

the announcement earlier this week that the Cuomo administration is giving counties across the region the go-ahead to start this summer's local road and bridge projects.

In a joint statement, O'Mara, Palmesano, and Friend said, "We are pleased that the Cuomo administration has responded to our calls, together with the calls of industry and local government leaders across New York State, to move forward on this summer's local road and bridge work. These critical projects had been on hold and the state's delay was raising serious concerns that any prolonged slowdown would have severe economic consequences for local economies and lead to even more job losses. This infrastructure work will be a badly needed jumpstart for regional economies hard-hit by the COVID-19 response."

The state gave the go-ahead to the funding for local projects earlier this week.

Prior to this week's announcement, O'Mara, Palmesano, and Friend were joined by transportation, construction, and local government leaders from across the state to urge the Cuomo administration to release the funding. In addition to the state associations representing county and town highway superintendents, other local roads advocates included the state Association of General Contractors, Association of Counties, Association of Towns, and Conference of Mayors.

They said that the local transportation work remained on hold awaiting the release of state funding as well as the necessary state authorizations that counties are required to have before moving forward with projects.

In a letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo on May 27, the area state lawmakers highlighted the importance of the work to local economies across upstate, rural New York. They urged the governor to immediately direct the state Department of Transportation (DOT) to release approximately \$743 million in local transportation aid enacted earlier this year as part of the

2020-2021 state budget, including funding through several key programs including the Consolidated Local Streets and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS), PAVE-NY, and Extreme Winter Recovery.

They warned that the state could not afford to risk the economic consequences of a prolonged slowdown in local road and bridge work.

O'Mara, Palmesano, and Friend wrote in their May 27th letter to Cuomo, "As you know, over the past decade we have worked closely with county and town highway superintendents and local transportation leaders from throughout New York State to help lead the 'Local Roads Matter' advocacy campaign that has continually highlighted the fundamental role that this system plays as a foundation of local economies.

"Now that New York is beginning to reopen and as we all look forward to getting our local economies moving again, we believe it should be a top priority to maintain a strong state commitment to local transportation infrastructure as one effective and commonsense way to reinvigorate economic sectors that have been hit so hard by the COVID-19 response."

Since 2013, O'Mara, Palmesano, Friend and many of their legislative colleagues have joined county and town highway superintendents and other local transportation leaders from throughout New York to promote a stronger state commitment to local transportation infrastructure through the "Local Roads Matter" advocacy campaign. Over the past seven years, largely through a series of "extreme winter recovery" allocations distributed through the CHIPS funding formula, and together with the PAVE-NY and BRIDGE-NY programs established in 2016, important increased state support has been provided for New York's counties, cities, towns, and villages.