



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## STATE SEEKS TO REPLACE FULL BRIDGE AUTHORITY GOVERNING BOARD

SUSAN SERINO July 22, 2020



ALBANY, NY—While Hudson Valley lawmakers were successful in rejecting an Executive Budget proposal that would have merged the NYS Bridge Authority with the Thruway Authority, Senator Sue Serino today is raising concerns about new appointments to the governing board that could threaten the autonomy of the Bridge Authority.

This year's state budget included language that expired the terms of all the members of the Bridge Authority's current governing body and gives the Executive the power to completely

replace the Bridge Authority's Board of Commissioners. Following the passage of the budget, Serino warned stakeholders to remain vigilant in monitoring the measure to ensure that it does not result in a de facto takeover over the Authority. Tomorrow, the Senate is slated to vote on a seven new board members despite the fact that there were only two vacancies needing to be filled prior to the passage of the budget. Senator Serino is urging the Legislature to utilize their confirmation power to reject any nomination that replaces a current member.

*Senator Sue Serino said, "What is the reason for cutting short the terms of these dedicated public officials if not to replace them with people more apt to agree with your position? We led the fight against the Bridge Authority merger because we have significant concerns about what it would mean for toll prices and local control of the bridges. Defeating the merger was a major victory for the region, but the devil is always in the details and language tucked into the final state budget gave the Governor the authority to totally replace the governing board of the Authority. This was one of the many reasons I voted against the budget. By replacing all of these board members, it raises significant red flags and about the state's intentions and I urge my colleagues to oppose any unnecessary appointments."*

The Bridge Authority owns and maintains the Newburgh-Beacon, Bear Mountain, Kingston-Rhinecliff, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Mid-Hudson and Rip Van Winkle bridges along with the Walkway Over the Hudson, while the Thruway Authority owns and operates the Governor Mario M. Cuomo (Tappan Zee) Bridge.

The Bridge Authority's governing body is a Board of Commissioners made up of seven members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Currently, there are five members on the board and two vacancies. The members are serving their current terms, many of which were not set to expire until 2021 and one of which was not slated to expire until 2023. The measure included in the final state budget immediately expired the terms of these duly confirmed members and gave the Governor the power to nominate all new members. As a result of the budget language, the current members were only authorized to serve in a holdover status until new members are appointed.

