



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## O'Mara and Palmesano say increased funding for local roads and bridges in state budget long overdue: Highlight agreement to provide additional state transportation aid

THOMAS F. O'MARA April 16, 2021

| ISSUE: **LOCAL ROADS AND BRIDGES**



State investment in our local transportation infrastructure is vital to the post-COVID future of local communities, economies, environments, governments, and taxpayers. We have long stood together with New York's county and town highway superintendents, and local leaders, to do everything we can to raise awareness and call for legislative support.

**Elmira, N.Y., April 16**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) today said that the newly enacted 2021-2022 New York State

budget provides significantly increased state support for local roads, bridges, and culverts.

In a joint statement, O'Mara and Palmesano said, "Local roads are essential. This year's state budget includes critical steps and increased funding to move forward on this priority. State investment in our local transportation infrastructure is vital to the post-COVID future of local communities, economies, environments, governments, and taxpayers. We have long stood together with New York's county and town highway superintendents, and local leaders, to do everything we can to raise awareness and call for legislative support. Unmet needs and challenges will remain in the future, and we look forward to continue working together to prioritize the state's commitment to the effective maintenance and improvement of local roads, bridges, and culverts in every region of New York."

O'Mara and Palmesano said the new budget increases base level funding for the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) by \$100 million to a total of \$538 million, the first baseline increase since 2013. The budget increases funding for Extreme Winter Recovery to \$100 million and for the PAVE-NY program to \$150 million. It also creates a new, \$100-million City Touring Roads program to provide an additional source of funding dedicated to cities, towns, and villages.

O'Mara and Palmesano said that area counties will receive the following 2021-2022 CHIPS, Extreme Winter Recovery (EWR), PAVE-NY funding (in each category of aid, funding amounts are followed by percentage increases from the 2020-2021 allocations):

> **Chemung County:** CHIPS, \$1,993,316.27 (+21.33%); Extreme Winter Recovery (EWR), \$348,997.41 (+53.85%); PAVE-NY, \$562,998.22 (+50.13%);

> **Schuyler County:** CHIPS, \$1,039,027.93 (+20.67%); EWR, \$177,998.85 (+53.85%); PAVE-NY, \$294,807.68 (+50%);

> **Steuben County:** CHIPS, \$5,418,385.61 (+22.32%); EWR, \$988,567.50 (+53.85%); PAVE-NY, \$1,516,725.10 (+50%);

> **Tompkins County:** CHIPS, \$2,466,047.30 (+22.31%); EWR, \$450,966.78 (+53.85%); PAVE-NY, \$689,933.00 (+49.91%);

> **Yates County:** CHIPS, \$1,430,430.24 (+22.53%); EWR, \$262,998.33 (+53.85%); PAVE-NY, \$399,716.93 (+50%).

Palmesano, who also represents a part of Seneca County, said that the allocations for Seneca County are: CHIPS, \$1,246,310.96 (+22.03%); EWR, \$225,998.19 (+53.85%); and PAVE-NY, \$349,344.82 (+49.85%).

[NOTE: See the following link for a full breakdown of CHIPS, Extreme Weather Recovery, and PAVE-NY allocations for cities, towns, and villages:

<https://www.dot.ny.gov/programs/chips/chips-budget>]

At the beginning of March, like they have throughout the past decade, O'Mara and Palmesano rallied the support of more than 60 state Senators and members of the Assembly to get behind the call from county and town highway superintendents and other local leaders from throughout New York for increased state support for local roads, bridges and culverts. [Read and Watch more from their March 3rd news conference at the State Capitol **HERE.**]

The annual advocacy campaign, renamed this year as "Local Roads Are Essential," is sponsored by the New York State Association of County Highway Superintendents (NYSCHSA) and the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways, Inc. (NYSAOTSOH).

Since 2013, O'Mara and Palmesano have organized legislative colleagues to get behind the effort and raise awareness of the need.

Among other studies, an October 2017 report from State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli estimated that locally owned bridges alone need at least \$27.4 billion in repairs. An earlier report from the comptroller called 32% of New York's local bridges deficient and 40% of local roads fair or poor, and getting worse.

TRIP, a Washington, D.C.-based national transportation research nonprofit, has found that 10 percent of bridges across the state are in poor/structurally deficient condition – the 12th highest rate in America. According to TRIP, nearly 12 million vehicles cross a poor/structurally deficient bridge in New York State every day.

In a March 1, 2021 letter to Cuomo and legislative leaders, O'Mara, Palmesano and their Senate and Assembly colleagues wrote, "We once again stress that New York State's direct investment in local roads and bridges through the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) remains fundamental to the mission highlighted above. It deserves priority consideration in the final allocation of state infrastructure investment the Executive proposes for the 2021-22 fiscal year. CHIPS is the key difference for local communities, economies, governments, motorists and taxpayers throughout the Empire State, including New York City and surrounding metro areas, and we should no longer ignore this fact. This legislative session we believe the opportunity exists to strengthen our investment to address the tremendous, still unmet needs and challenges facing the effective maintenance and improvement of local roads, bridges and culverts in every region of New York State."

According to a recently updated analysis by the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways, the local highway system outside of New York City faces an annual funding gap of \$1.7 billion.