



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

Senator Michelle Hinchey Announces \$50,000 Grant to Help Build Helipad at Kiskatom Fire Department

MICHELLE HINCHEY July 29, 2022



CATSKILL, NY – Senator Michelle Hinchey today announced a \$50,000 grant awarded by her office to the Kiskatom Fire Department through the State and Municipal Facilities Capital (SAM) grant program. The funding will support the construction of a medivac helicopter landing zone at the firehouse (4844 State Route 32), where New Yorkers will be airlifted to nearby hospitals for emergency care.

The capital project includes the construction of an access road from State Route 32, built

large enough to accommodate any responding firetrucks and ambulance vehicles that are required to safely transfer patients to an aircraft, as well as outdoor lighting to ensure the helipad remains fully functional during the night hours. Medivac helicopters administered by Albany Medical Center, the New York State Police, and agencies from across the region will be able to utilize the helipad for emergency transports requested by Greene County.

“This funding is about giving our first responders the tools they need to save lives,” **Senator Michelle Hinchey said.** “Greene County doesn’t have a local hospital, but we do have incredible first responders who work tirelessly to ensure our residents receive the care they need as quickly and safely as possible. I am always fighting to expand healthcare in our rural communities, and this helipad will create faster, more accessible connections to emergency care. I thank Kiskatom Fire Chief Peter Kusminsky and all of the firefighters in this unit for their vision on this project, which will increase healthcare equity across our communities by expanding lifesaving services.”

Kiskatom Fire Chief Peter Kusminsky said, “The Kiskatom Fire Department would like to thank Senator Hinchey, and members of her office, for the \$50,000 SAM Grant. This grant will be used to construct a helicopter landing pad for emergency air lifts. This landing pad will make the community and the first responders safer.”

A leading advocate in the State Senate for health equity, Senator Hinchey has sponsored several pieces of legislation to expand healthcare access in New York, including a bill that overturned an outdated state law that prevented medivac helicopters and responders onboard from carrying and administering blood transfusions to trauma patients in the field. **S4085A-HINCHEY** allows medivac responders and companies the ability to airlift and transfuse blood, donate unused blood to rural hospitals where resources are scarce, and store blood products at their bases without obtaining blood bank permits from each hospital

blood bank, as was previously required. With the signing of Hinchey's bill in December 2021, New York became the final state in the nation to allow air ambulances to transfuse blood products, ensuring that rural and upstate residents—who are geographically further from trauma centers in comparison to their urban counterparts—have equitable access to lifesaving transfusions.

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