

**SENATOR TOM O'MARA
ASSEMBLYMAN PHIL PALMESANO**



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 7, 2018

STATE LEGISLATORS AND LOCAL LEADERS: LOCAL ROADS AND BRIDGES NEED GREATER STATE INVESTMENT

Winter storm forces cancellation of today's advocacy rally at the Capitol, but group still calls on governor, legislative leaders to increase CHIPS base aid and restore "Extreme Winter Recovery" allocation

Albany, N.Y., March 7—A bipartisan group of 142 state legislators, organized by State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning), today joined a statewide coalition of county and town highway superintendents and other local leaders to call for increased state support for local roads, bridges and culverts.

Approximately 700 local highway superintendents and highway department employees representing nearly every region of New York State have been in Albany this week as part of the annual "Local Roads Matter" advocacy campaign. As part of the effort for the past several years, O'Mara and Palmesano have organized a bipartisan group of state legislators in the Senate and Assembly who have joined the local roads representatives and other local leaders from across the state to call for increased state support for local roads, bridges and culverts.

This year's "Local Roads Matter" coalition includes nearly 70% of the State Legislature's entire membership.

A news conference and rally previously scheduled to be held in The Well of the Legislative Office Building on Wednesday morning was cancelled due to the snowstorm forecast to impact counties along the north-south State Thruway corridor especially hard throughout today and into tomorrow. The local roads supporters highlighted the storm as another example of why the increased state funding they're seeking is so critical -- and warranted.

O'Mara, Palmesano and other state legislators are joining "Local Roads Matter" representatives, and other local leaders, this year to call for increasing state base aid for the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) by \$85 million to a total of \$523 million. They are also seeking the restoration of a \$65-million "Extreme Winter Recovery" allocation enacted last year but not included in Governor Andrew Cuomo's proposed 2018-2019 state budget. Combined, this \$150-million increase would bring total CHIPS aid in 2018-19 to \$588.1 million.

In a February 28 letter to Cuomo and legislative leaders, O'Mara, Palmesano and their Senate and Assembly colleagues wrote, "We believe it is critically important to build on our past successes and renew our commitment to addressing the tremendous, unmet needs and challenges to maintain local roads, bridges, and culverts effectively in every region of New York State... This level of state assistance, at a minimum, has become central to providing the critical flexibility and funding that localities need to help meet their growing and challenging infrastructure demands."

Beginning with the 2013-14 state budget, their efforts have helped increase funding through the CHIPS Program/Formula by more than \$200 million, or upwards of 40%. Together with the PAVE-NY and BRIDGE-NY programs established two years ago, the programs are providing significant funding increases for counties, cities, towns and villages throughout New York State. In their own legislative districts, for example, O'Mara and Palmesano said that aid percentage increases since 2012-13 have ranged from 50% to 55%.

This year's "Local Roads Matter" campaign is making the case for an even stronger state commitment to local roads, bridges and culverts. Supporters argue that CHIPS funding has become especially critical in an era for local governments defined by the local property tax cap, stagnant aid to municipalities (AIM) and shrinking local revenues. They note that municipalities own and maintain 87% of the roads in the state, own and maintain 52% of New York's 18,000 bridges, and that 48% of the vehicle miles driven in the state are on local roads.

In their February 28 letter to the governor and legislative leaders, the "Local Roads Matter" legislative coalition stresses the urgency to "recognize that local governments continue to struggle to address budgetary demands in the face of the state-imposed property tax cap and freeze, rising pension and health care costs, unfunded state mandates, and stagnant Aid to Municipalities (AIM). This clearly demonstrates the incredible challenge facing our local municipalities to meet the critical investment level needed to maintain and improve local roads, bridges, and culverts. A stronger state-local partnership is the only answer."

The legislative coalition adds that the "investment levels we are seeking, through the CHIPS, BRIDGE-NY, and PAVE-NY programs, will build on the foundation we have successfully made in the last several state budgets and further solidify our fundamental belief that 'Local Roads Matter!' Through the renewed, vigorous state investment we have outlined, we will finally move toward the safe and reliable local infrastructure we envision, an infrastructure that will serve as the catalyst for future economic development and job creation throughout our local communities."

[See the attached letter and list of Senate and Assembly signees]

In an October 2017 report, State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli estimated that bridges owned by local governments currently need an estimated \$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. In a 2013 study, the state Association of Town Superintendents of Highways (NYSAOTSOH) estimated that New York would need to invest an additional \$1.3 billion per year on local roads and bridges to prevent them from becoming deficient. A national transportation advocacy group, TRIP, has estimated that deteriorating roads cost New York

motorists nearly an additional \$25 billion annually – approximately \$2,300 for the average driver in some areas -- in lost time, fuel costs, vehicle repairs and other expenses.

Charles H. “Skip” Vezzetti, President of the New York State County Highway Superintendents Association (NYSCHSA), said, “Legislators and the Governor are to be applauded for their efforts to increase state funding for local roads and bridges. The reality is that local highway departments still need a significant state aid boost to effectively address the daunting financial challenges to maintaining their vast ailing and aging transportation infrastructure. An increase in the CHIPS base aid as called for by members of the Legislature is the best way to assure more financial resources flow to all municipalities to improve the conditions of this critical statewide system of roads, bridges and culverts.”

Bernhard Meyer, President of the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways (NYSAOTSOH), said, “New York’s local transportation system is the backbone of our state’s well-being. Our homes, schools, hospitals and businesses are all accessed by local highways. Our members diligently work to maintain the highest of safety standards on this huge system. We thank our partners in the New York State Legislature for their support of a local road, bridge and culvert funding increase of \$150 million distributed by formula equitably through the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS).”

Stephen J. Acquario, Executive Director of the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), said, “We rely on our local roads and bridges to get to work, to school, and back home again. State investments in local roads and bridges are investments in economic development and safety. We applaud Senator O’Mara and Assemblyman Palmesano for their consistent fight for more local road and bridge funding in the State Budget, and we are proud to stand with our county highway superintendents who work, day in and day out, for better, safer roads in our communities.”

Gerry Geist, Executive Director of the Association of Towns of the State of New York (AOT), said, “Safe and reliable roads and bridges are essential to New York’s economy and quality of life, which is why we are calling for an increase to CHIPS funding and the restoration of the Extreme Winter Recovery Program. The Association of Towns is proud to stand with Senator O’Mara, Assemblyman Palmesano, and other state and local leaders in support of additional funding for our local roads, bridges and culverts.”

Peter A. Baynes, Executive Director of the New York State Conference of Mayors (NYCOM), said, “Local roads and bridges are the bedrock of New York’s transportation network and they support all sectors of New York’s economy. A strong and growing state investment in our municipal roads and bridges is both essential and smart. NYCOM strongly supports this bipartisan effort to increase CHIPS funding and restore the ‘Extreme Winter Recovery’ program.”

Jeff Williams, New York Farm Bureau Public Policy Director, said, “Local roads matter to farmers who depend on safe, reliable roads and bridges to get products to market and move farm machinery in between farm fields. We are proud to stand with the coalition calling for strong CHIPS funding to maintain an effective infrastructure in this state that is essential for our rural economy.”

Mike Elmendorf, President and CEO of the Associated General Contractors of New York State, said, “It’s pothole season in New York—and it sure is a bumpier crop this year. As they attempt to dodge potholes on streets starting to resemble the surface of the moon, it is starkly evident to New Yorkers all across the state that our infrastructure is failing. Despite some recent progress, the level of investment in our infrastructure remains inadequate to meet our growing needs. As a result, our roads are crumbling and our bridges are deteriorating. I commend Senator O’Mara, Assemblyman Palmesano and their colleagues for their continued leadership on this critical issue and I am proud to stand with them in the fight for increased investment in our roads and bridges. The future of our communities and our economy depends on it.”

Gib Gagnon, Chairman of Rebuild NY Now, said, ““The CHIPS program is a critical investment for localities struggling to provide basic services within the 2% property tax cap. The Governor, Senator O’Mara, Assemblyman Palmesano, and other legislators must continue working in a bipartisan manner to invest in infrastructure for the safety of commuters and the economic benefit of our local communities. Once again, we are entering pothole season in New York, and CHIPS funding helps to improve the quality of our local roads and save drivers from unnecessary repairs to damaged cars. The average cost of car repairs related to damaged roads in New York State is more than \$1,500, which is a lot of money for the majority of taxpayers. Rebuild NY Now will continue advocating for infrastructure investments in New York and in Washington, D.C. The New York State Congressional delegation must work in a bipartisan manner to ensure that New York gets our fair share in the next federal transportation plan. If our state leaders can work in a bipartisan manner, it’s time for Washington to do the same and pass a fully-funded infrastructure program. Thank you to Senator O’Mara and Assemblyman Palmesano for leading the charge in demanding action for our critical infrastructure needs.”



NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

February 28, 2018

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Executive Chamber
State Capitol, Second Floor
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Paul Karas, Acting Commissioner
NYS Department of Transportation
50 Wolf Road
Albany, NY 12232

Hon. John J. Flanagan
Temporary President and Majority Leader
Room 330 Capitol
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
Room 932 LOB
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Jeffrey A. Klein
Senate Coalition Leader
Independent Democratic Conference Leader
Room 913 LOB
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Democratic Conference Leader
Room 907 LOB
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Brian Kolb
Assembly Minority Conference Leader
Room 933 LOB
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Joseph Morelle
Assembly Majority Leader
Room 926 LOB
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Joseph E. Robach, Chair
Senate Transportation Committee
Room 803 LOB
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. David Gantt, Chair
Assembly Transportation Committee
Room 830 LOB
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Governor Cuomo and Legislative Leaders:

For the sixth consecutive session, on behalf of local transportation leaders, municipalities, and taxpayers from throughout our respective legislative districts and across New York State, we once again appreciate and welcome the opportunity to contact you on the need for state investment in local roads, bridges, and culverts.

We first would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our strong support for the PAVE-NY and BRIDGE-NY programs enacted as part of the 2016-17 state budget. These initiatives are providing critical funding for additional road paving, and bridge and culvert work statewide for both the state and local systems.

Further, as we continue to focus on improving New York's locally maintained transportation infrastructure, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS), which makes the key difference for so many communities, economies, and motorists throughout New York.

We continue to value your commitment and leadership on this important issue and we ask for your support as we begin our 2018-19 budget negotiations. We believe it is critically important to build on our past successes and renew our commitment to addressing the tremendous, unmet needs and challenges to maintain local roads, bridges, and culverts effectively in every region of New York State.

We believe an even stronger commitment in this year's final budget to our locally maintained transportation infrastructure is not only feasible and justified, but also imperative to realizing our shared economic, fiscal, and community development goals.

Therefore, we are again proudly joining with our local leaders to urge you to support a multi-year strategy to help provide our citizens, local property taxpayers, tourists, and motorists with the kind of local transportation system they rely on and deserve.

At a time when local governments face increasingly difficult fiscal constraints due to the tax cap and long-stagnant state aid to municipalities, we cannot stress enough the importance of CHIPS. Furthermore, CHIPS is fundamentally important to local economic development through the hiring of local contractors and local workers. Equally important, every additional dollar of state support means a dollar less that our local property taxpayers have to pay. We simply must keep making these investments in economic growth, job creation, and property tax relief throughout New York State.

First and foremost, it is critical to note that the proposed 2018-19 Executive Budget eliminates a \$65-million "Extreme Winter Recovery" allocation enacted last year. These funds have become essential to the ability of our municipalities to address local needs and, particularly within the context of another extreme winter season, fundamental to our state-level commitment.

Therefore, in the final 2018-19 state budget, we are seeking the restoration of a \$65-million "Extreme Winter Recovery" allocation, as well as an additional \$85 million to increase the CHIPS base aid funding level. Together, this additional \$150-million investment would bring total state assistance to \$588 million annually. We strongly believe this funding level is absolutely necessary to help meet the increasing infrastructure needs of our local communities.

This level of state assistance, at a minimum, has become central to providing the critical flexibility and funding that localities need to help meet their growing and challenging infrastructure demands.

We believe there is a compelling case for New York State to take these proposed steps to address these urgent local transportation and infrastructure shortcomings, and we believe it is simply the right thing to do.

Please review the following facts, which we have highlighted before, as you consider our recommendations:

- Local governments are responsible for maintaining nearly 87 percent of the roads in New York State and one-half of the state's 18,000 bridges;
- Drivers on local roads contribute nearly half of the gas taxes collected in New York State;
- Forty-eight percent of the vehicle miles traveled in New York are on local roads, yet less than 12 percent of the taxes and fees paid to the state by these drivers go back to maintaining local roads;
- Federal transportation aid to New York (FAST Act) is directed primarily to the National Highway System (interstates, principal arterials, and expressways), which means less funding reaching local systems;
- Estimates by the State Comptroller, state Department of Transportation (DOT), and other independent studies have shown a large number of local road mileage deteriorating and many local bridges rated structurally deficient or functionally obsolete;
- Thirty-six percent of bridges are deficient and 38 percent of road pavements are rated fair or poor, and getting worse;
- According to TRIP, a national transportation advocacy group, roads and bridges that are deficient, congested, or lack desirable safety features, cost New York motorists an additional \$24.9 billion annually — nearly \$2,300 per driver in some areas — due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic accidents, and congestion-related delays;
- Although much has been mentioned about choosing projects that have a statewide economic development impact, we contend that businesses locate in towns, villages, and cities and, therefore, it is equally important to ensure local roads and bridges are maintained to spur economic development and job creation, while helping to control property taxes for individuals and businesses;
- Every \$1 invested in the CHIPS program is \$1 less the local property taxpayer has to pay. Additionally, every \$1 invested in the CHIPS program can save from \$6-\$14 in long-term rehabilitation costs. This state assistance benefits the middle class struggling with high local property taxes;
- Safety. How many of our first responders travel over our local roads and bridges to get to an emergency or crisis? How many of our children and grandchildren are placed on school buses

every morning and travel over local roads and bridges? It is troubling that we may be risking tragic accidents involving children, first responders, families, farmers, and motorists overall because we are not making the critical and necessary safety improvements to address this growing crisis;

- Our nationally and internationally recognized agriculture and tourism industries are equally dependent upon a well-maintained and viable local infrastructure. Going from a well-conditioned state road to a deteriorating local road or deficient bridge does not send the right message to our local visitors and farmers;
- Locally administered highway projects will result in business for local contractors and work crews that will provide local employment and economic opportunities;
- The State Comptroller further estimates there will be \$89 billion in unmet local infrastructure needs over the next 20 years. In an October 2017 report, the comptroller estimated that bridges owned by local governments currently need an estimated \$27.4 billion in repairs; and
- According to an analysis by the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways, the local highway system faces an annual funding gap of \$1.3 billion.

Adding to the alarming urgency of all of the above, we also have to recognize that local governments continue to struggle to address budgetary demands in the face of the state-imposed property tax cap and freeze, rising pension and health care costs, unfunded state mandates, and stagnant Aid to Municipalities (AIM). This clearly demonstrates the incredible challenge facing our local municipalities to meet the critical investment level needed to maintain and improve local roads, bridges, and culverts. A stronger state-local partnership is the only answer.

In closing, the commitment and investment levels we are seeking, through the CHIPS, BRIDGE-NY, and PAVE-NY programs, will build on the foundation we have successfully made in the last several state budgets and further solidify our fundamental belief that "Local Roads Matter!" Through the renewed, vigorous state investment we have outlined, we will finally move toward the safe and reliable local infrastructure we envision, an infrastructure that will serve as the catalyst for future economic development and job creation throughout our local communities.

As always, thank you for your leadership and thoughtful consideration of this very important request. We look forward to working with you once again to achieve these critical goals and make the 2018-19 New York State budget truly transformative for our local transportation system.

Sincerely,



Thomas F. O'Mara
Senate District 58



Philip A. Palmesano
Assembly District 132

Summary of Senate Signees ~ CHIPS/Bridge/Culvert Funding

Senators:

Fred Akshar, 52nd SD
George A. Amedore, Jr., 46th SD
Tony Avella, 11th District
John J. Bonacic, 42nd SD
Phil Boyle, 4th SD
Neil D. Breslin, 44th SD
David Carlucci, 38th SD
Leroy Comrie, 14th SD
Thomas D. Croci, 3rd SD
John A. DeFrancisco, 50th SD
Simcha Felder, 17th SD
Rich Funke, 55th SD
Patrick M. Gallivan, 59th SD
Martin J. Golden, 22nd SD
Joseph A. Griffo, 47th SD
Jesse Hamilton, 20th SD
Kemp Hannon, 6th SD
Pamela Helming, 54th SD
Chris Jacobs, 60th SD
Todd Kaminsky, 9th SD
Timothy M. Kennedy, 63rd SD
William J. Larkin Jr., 39th SD
Betty Little, 45th SD
Carl L. Marcellino, 5th SD
Kathleen A. Marchione, 43rd SD
Terrence P. Murphy, 40th SD
Thomas F. O'Mara, 58th SD
Robert G. Ort, 62nd SD
Elaine Phillips, 7th SD
Michael H. Ranzenhofer, 61st SD
Patty Ritchie, 48th SD
Joseph E. Robach, 56th SD
Diane J. Savino, 23rd SD
Sue Serino, 41st SD
James L. Seward, 51st SD
James Tedisco, 49th SD
David J. Valesky, 53rd SD
Catharine Young, 57th SD

Summary of Signatures for CHIPS/Bridge Funding (2018)

Assemblymembers:

Peter J. Abbate Jr. 49th A.D.
Thomas J. Abinanti 92nd A.D.
Carmen E. Arroyo 84th A.D.
Will Barclay 120th A.D.
Brian Barnwell 30th A.D.
Didi Barrett 106th A.D.
Michael A. Blake, 79th A.D.
Kenneth D. Blankenbush 117th A.D.
Karl Brabenec 98th A.D.
Edward Braunstein 98th A.D.
Anthony Brindisi 119th A.D.
Harry Bronson 138th A.D.
David Buchwald 93rd A.D.
Marc W. Butler 118th A.D.
Kevin M. Byrne 94th A.D.
Kevin A. Cahill 103rd A.D.
Ronald Castorina Jr. 62nd A.D.
Marcos Crespo 85th A.D.
Clifford W. Crouch 122nd A.D.
Brian Curran 21st A.D.
Michael Cusick 63rd A.D.
Carmen De La Rosa 72nd A.D.
Michael DenDekker 34th A.D.
Inez E. Dickens 70th A.D.
Erik Martin Dilan 54th A.D.
David J. DiPietro 147th A.D.
Anthony D'Urso 16th A.D.
Steven Englebright 4th A.D.
Joseph A. Errigo 133rd A.D.
Patricia Fahy 109th A.D.
Gary D. Finch 126th A.D.
Michael J. Fitzpatrick 8th A.D.
Christopher Friend 124th A.D.
Sandra R. Galef 95th A.D.
Andrew Garbarino 7th A.D.
Joseph M. Giglio 148th A.D.
Andrew Goodell 150th A.D.
Aileen M. Gunther 100th A.D.
Stephen Hawley 139th A.D.
Andrew Hevesi 28th A.D.
Pamela J. Hunter 128th A.D.
Alicia Hyndman 29th A.D.
Ellen Jaffee 97th A.D.
Mark Johns 135th A.D.
D. Billy Jones 115th A.D.
Ron Kim 40th A.D.
Brian M. Kolb 131st A.D.
Kieran Lalor 105th A.D.
Charles Lavine 13th A.D.
Peter Lawrence 134th A.D.
Joseph Lentol 50th A.D.
Donna A. Lupardo 123rd A.D.
William Magee 121st A.D.
Nicole Malliotakis 64th A.D.
Shelley Mayer 90th A.D.
John T. McDonald III 108th A.D.
David McDonough 14th A.D.
Brian D. Miller 101st A.D.
Melissa Miller 20th A.D.
Michael Miller 38th A.D.
Michael Montesano 15th A.D.
Angelo J. Morinello 145th A.D.
Walter T. Mosley, 57th A.D.
Dean Murray 3rd A.D.
Yuh-Line Niou 65th A.D.
Michael J. Norris 144th A.D.
Robert C. Oaks 130th A.D.
Felix Ortiz 51st A.D.
Steven Otis 91st A.D.
Philip A. Palmesano 132nd A.D.
Anthony H. Palumbo 2nd A.D.
Amy R. Paulin 88th A.D.
Christine Pellegrino 9th A.D.
Stacey Pheffer Amato 23rd A.D.
Victor Pichardo 86th A.D.
Daniel Quart 73rd A.D.
Edward Ra 19th A.D.
Andrew P. Raja 12th A.D.
Jose Rivera 78th A.D.
Robert Rodriguez 68th A.D.
Dan Rosenthal 27th A.D.
Nily Rozic 25th A.D.
Sean Ryan 149th A.D.
Angelo Santabarbara 111th A.D.
Robin L. Schimminger 140th A.D.
Rebecca A. Seawright 76th A.D.
Luis Sepulveda 87th A.D.
Jo Anne Simon 52nd A.D.
Frank Skartados 104th A.D.
James Skoufis 99th A.D.
Michaelle C. Solages 22nd A.D.
Daniel Stec 114th A.D.
Philip Steck 110th A.D.
Albert Stirpe 127th A.D.
Al Taylor 71st A.D.
Fred W. Thiele Jr. 1st A.D.
Clyde Vanel 33rd A.D.
Monica P. Wallace 143rd A.D.
Mary Beth Walsh 112th A.D.
Raymond W. Walter 146th A.D.
David I. Weprin 24th A.D.
Jaime R. Williams 59th A.D.
Carrie Woerner 113th A.D.
Kenneth P. Zebrowski A.D.