



NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

March 1, 2021

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

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Temporary President and Majority Leader
Room 907 LOB
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Robert G. Ort
Senate Minority Conference Leader
Room 315 Capitol
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Timothy M. Kennedy
Chair, Senate Transportation Committee
Room 708 LOB
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Marie Therese Dominguez, Commissioner
NYS Department of Transportation
50 Wolf Road
Albany, NY 12232

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

Hon. William A. Barclay
Assembly Minority Conference Leader
Room 933 LOB
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. William B. Magnarelli
Chair, Assembly Transportation Committee
Room 830 LOB
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Governor Cuomo and Legislative Leaders:

For the ninth consecutive session, on behalf of local transportation leaders, municipalities and taxpayers from throughout our respective legislative districts and across New York State, we welcome this opportunity to address the urgent need for greater state investment in local roads, bridges and culverts.

We appreciate the enormous fiscal challenges COVID-19 has placed on our state and its local governments. The Executive's proposed 2021-22 budget attempts to strike an important balance between fiscal constraint and ensuring the continuation of critical spending. In light of these challenges, the Governor proposes increasing the State's multiyear capital spending from \$275 billion in last year's budget to \$306 billion this year. In announcing his fiscal plan the Governor noted, "Not even COVID stopped us. We used the period of reduced traffic to accelerate projects throughout the state. Altogether, we are expanding our infrastructure plan to invest \$306 billion in the future of New York. That's not just the largest infrastructure plan in New York history. It's the largest, most ambitious plan put forward by any state in the nation."

We agree but unfortunately, some state-funded capital programs were not accelerated and, instead, were actually reduced. State spending on local highway and bridge funding was delayed by 69 days after

the budget was adopted in April. And even then, every community in the state had their Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS), PAVE-NY and Emergency Winter Recovery funds reduced by 20 percent or more than \$120 million.

We believe that New York State's investment in local transportation infrastructure must be a foundation of the nation's most aggressive infrastructure program in order for this program to ever achieve its envisioned goals.

It's important to be clear at the outset that equitability, fairness and parity remain essential when funding our state's infrastructure. We recognize the importance of funding for the MTA Capital Plan as a critical infrastructure investment that is necessary to meet the transportation needs of residents, commuters and visitors for our downstate region. The Executive's budget calls for state taxpayers to take on \$10.3 billion in new capital bonds to support the current MTA's five-year capital plan and \$1.3 billion for the Empire Station Complex, otherwise known as the Penn Station.

We also recognize that funding for the DOT Capital Plan is an equally necessary and critical investment for all the residents, motorists and taxpayers of the State of New York. We are one state, with challenging infrastructure needs statewide, and therefore we believe it is critically important that the capital needs of the MTA and the DOT each receive the level of funding necessary to keep both systems in a state of good repair. While overall spending on highways and bridges remains flat in the Executive's budget, an increased share of this spending is being devoted toward signature projects rather than core pavement and bridge repair. The Governor's proposed 2021-22 budget projects that \$1.3B will be spent on signature projects while only \$2.25B will be spent on core preservation, the lowest level in five years. Additionally, \$426 million in federal COVID relief eligible for use by the NYS Department of Transportation should be appropriated to support projects on top of the existing \$5.9 billion DOT capital plan proposed in the Executive budget.

While the proposed budget calls for continuation of such valuable programs as CHIPS, BRIDGE-NY and PAVE-NY, the budget proposal holds CHIPS funding at \$438 million for what will be the ninth year. The BRIDGE-NY and PAVE-NY programs are also proposed to have no increases. In addition, the Extreme Winter Recovery program is cut to zero, all this despite the 33% funding increase in the overall two-year DOT Capital Program. As currently proposed, this means just \$678 million per year will be distributed to all localities throughout the state, including New York City, to address the needs of their systems.

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.

It is warranted. Local governments, for the foreseeable future, will continue to struggle to address budgetary demands in the face of the state-imposed property tax cap, rising pension and health care costs, unfunded state mandates, cuts in AIM and other local assistance, and, now, the loss of revenue due to COVID-19 economic restrictions and shutdowns, among other burdens – including, as noted previously, that the CHIPS base level has remained stagnant since 2013.

This is not the time to reduce state funding for local roads, bridges and culverts. Therefore, we put forth two funding requests, the first based on the state receiving up to \$6 billion in federal aid and the second if the state receives more than \$6 billion.

If New York State receives up to \$6 billion in federal aid, we request the following as part of the 2021-2022 budget:

- > Full restoration of the \$120.6 million 2020-21 state budget cut;
- > Fully fund CHIPS at \$438 million;
- > Increase Extreme Winter Recovery funding to \$100 million;
- > Fully fund BRIDGE-NY at \$100 million; and
- > Fully fund PAVE-NY at \$100 million.

If New York State receives federal aid above \$6 billion, we request:

- > Full restoration of the \$120.6 million 2020-21 state budget cut;
- > Increase CHIPS base funding level by \$150 million to a total of \$588 million;
- > Increase “Extreme Winter Recovery” to \$100 million;
- > Double PAVE-NY local funding from \$100 million to \$200 million; and
- > Double BRIDGE-NY local funding from \$100 million to \$200 million, with additional funding for culverts.

The case is compelling for New York State to take these proposed steps to address undeniable local transportation infrastructure shortcomings, and we believe it is simply the right thing to do. Local governments, for the foreseeable future, will continue to struggle to address COVID-19-related budgetary demands.

A stronger state-local partnership is the only solution to meeting the critical investment level needed to maintain and improve local roads, bridges and culverts. Keep in mind that:

- 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;
- 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;
- If the overriding goal is this state’s economic competitiveness, it cannot be overlooked that businesses locate in towns, villages and cities and, therefore, it is imperative to ensure that 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;
- Each \$150 million increase in funding for local roads, bridges and culverts results in up to 4,200 highway construction-related jobs;
- The State Comptroller has estimated there will be \$89 billion in unmet local infrastructure needs over the next two decades. In an October 2017 report, the comptroller estimated that bridges owned by local governments require an estimated \$27.4 billion in repairs; and
- According to a recently updated analysis by the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways, the local highway system outside NYC faces an annual funding gap of \$1.7 billion.

A long-overdue increase in the CHIPS base level, restoration of “Extreme Winter Recovery” assistance, and enhanced BRIDGE-NY and PAVE-NY allocations will significantly strengthen the foundation we have built over the last several state budgets and further solidify our fundamental belief that “Local Roads are Essential!”

Through the renewed, vigorous, long-term 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 community and economic development, job creation, and overall public and motorist safety.

Once again, thank you for your leadership and thoughtful consideration. We look forward to working with you to achieve these critical goals and make the 2021-22 New York State budget truly transformative for our local roads, bridges and culverts.

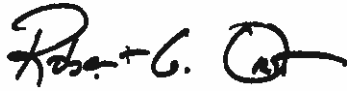
Sincerely,



Thomas F. O'Mara
Senate District 58



Philip A. Palmesano
Assembly District 132



Robert G. Ort
Senate District 62



Andrew J. Lanza
Senate District 24



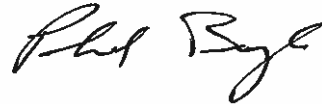
Joseph A. Griffo
Senate District 47



Fred Akshar
Senate District 52



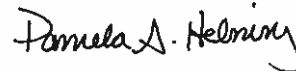
George M. Borrello
Senate District 57



Phil Boyle
Senate District 4



Patrick M. Gallivan
Senate District 59



Pamela Helming
Senate District 54



Daphne V. Jordan
Senate District 43



Senator Mike Martucci
Senate District 42



Mario R. Mattera
Senate District 2



Peter Oberacker
Senate District 51



Anthony H. Palumbo
Senate District 1



Edward A. Rath III
Senate District 61



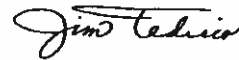
Patty Ritchie
Senate District 48



Sue Serino
Senate District 41



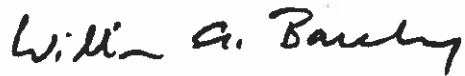
Daniel G. Stec
Senate District 45



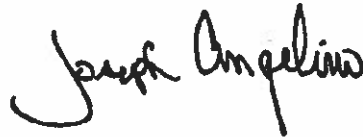
James Tedisco
Senate District 49



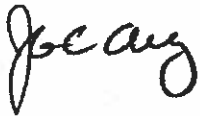
Alexis Weik
Senate District 3



Will Barclay
Assembly Minority Leader



Joseph Angelino
122nd Assembly District



Jacob Ashby
107th Assembly District



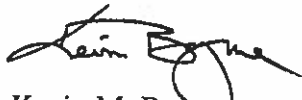
Kenneth D. Blankenbush
117th Assembly District



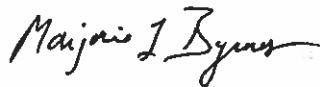
Karl Brabenec
98th Assembly District



Keith P. Brown
12th Assembly District



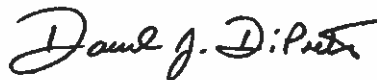
Kevin M. Byrne
94th Assembly District



Marjorie L. Byrnes
133rd Assembly District



Joseph P. DeStefano
3rd Assembly District



David J. DiPietro
147th Assembly District



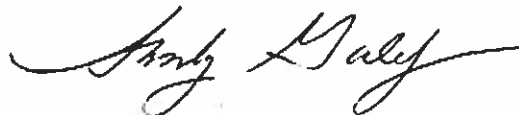
Michael Durso
9th Assembly District



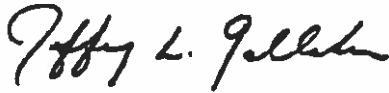
Michael J. Fitzpatrick
8th Assembly District



Christopher S. Friend
124th Assembly District



Sandy Galef
95th Assembly District



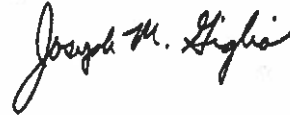
Jeffery Gallahan
131st Assembly District



Jarett Gandolfo
7th Assembly District



Jodi Giglio
2nd Assembly District



Joseph M. Giglio
148th Assembly District



Andrew Goodell
150th Assembly District



Stephen M. Hawley
139th Assembly District



Joshua T. Jensen
134th Assembly District



Michael Lawler
97th Assembly District



John Lemondes, Jr.
126th Assembly District



Brian D. Manktelow
130th Assembly District



David G. McDonough
14th Assembly District

John Mikulin
17th Assembly District

Brian D. Miller
101st Assembly District

Melissa "Missy" Miller
20th Assembly District

Michael A. Montesano
15th Assembly District

Angelo J. Morinello
145th Assembly District

Michael J. Norris
144th Assembly District

Edward P. Ra
19th Assembly District

Michael W. Reilly, Jr.
62nd Assembly District

John J. Salka
121st Assembly District

Colin J. Schmitt
99th Assembly District

Matthew Simpson
114th Assembly District

Douglas M. Smith
5th Assembly District

Robert J. Smullen
118th Assembly District

Christopher Tague
102nd Assembly District



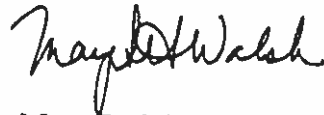
Michael Tannousis
64th Assembly District



Mark C. Walczyk
116th Assembly District



Fred W. Thiele, Jr.
1st Assembly District



Mary Beth Walsh
112th Assembly District

Summary of Senate Signees ~ Local Roads/Bridges/Culverts Funding

Senators:

Fred Akshar, 52nd SD
George M. Borrello, 57th SD
Phil Boyle, 4th SD
Patrick M. Gallivan, 59th SD
Joseph A. Griffo, 47th SD
Pamela Helming, 54th SD
Daphne Jordan, 43rd SD
Andrew Lanza, 24th SD
Mike Martucci, 42nd SD
Mario R. Mattera, 2nd SD
Thomas F. O'Mara, 58th SD
Peter Oberacker, 51st SD
Robert G. Ortt, 62nd SD
Anthony H. Palumbo, 1st SD
Edward A. Rath III, 61st
Patty Ritchie, 48th SD
Sue Serino, 41st SD
Daniel G. Stec, 45th SD
James Tedisco, 49th SD
Alexis Weik, 3rd SD

Summary of Signatures for CHIPS/Bridge Funding (2021)

Assemblymembers:

Joe Angelino 122nd A.D.
Jake Ashby 107th A.D.
Will Barclay 120th A.D.
Kenneth D. Blankenbush 117th A.D.
Karl Brabenec 98th A.D.
Keith Brown 12th A.D.
Kevin M. Byrne 94th A.D.
Marjorie L. Byrnes 133rd A.D.
Joseph DeStefano 3rd A.D.
David J. DiPietro 147th A.D.
Michael Durso 9th A.D.
Michael J. Fitzpatrick 8th A.D.
Christopher Friend 124th A.D.
Sandra R. Galef 95th A.D.
Jeffery Gallahan 131st A.D.
Jarett Gandolfo 7th A.D.
Jodi Giglio 2nd A.D.
Joseph M. Giglio 148th A.D.
Andrew Goodell 150th A.D.
Stephen Hawley 139th A.D.
Joshua Jensen 134th A.D.
Michael Lawler 97th A.D.
John Lemondes, Jr. 126th A.D.
Brian D. Manktelow 130th A.D.
David McDonough 14th A.D.
John Mikulin 17th A.D.
Brian D. Miller 101st A.D.
Melissa Miller 20th A.D.
Michael Montesano 15th A.D.
Angelo J. Morinello 145th A.D.
Michael J. Norris 144th A.D.
Philip A. Palmesano 132nd A.D.
Edward Ra 19th A.D.
Michael W. Reilly, Jr. 62nd A.D.
John J. Salka 121st A.D.
Colin Schmitt 99th A.D.
Matthew Simpson 114th A.D.
Douglas Smith 5th A.D.
Robert Smullen 118th A.D.
Christopher Tague 102nd A.D.
Michael Tannousis 64th A.D.
Fred W. Thiele Jr. 1st A.D.
Mark Walczyk 116th A.D.
Mary Beth Walsh 112th A.D.