



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Local Roads Matter

JAMES L. SEWARD March 4, 2015

| ISSUE: **TRANSPORTATION, BUDGET, HIGHWAYS**



ALBANY, 03/04/15 -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) today joined a bipartisan group of 114 state legislators along with county and town highway superintendents from across the state to call for increased state funding for local highway improvements.

“Local roads, bridges, and culverts are the foundation of our state’s infrastructure and the numbers bear that out,” said Senator Seward. **“Every time you leave your house, chances are high that you are doing most of your traveling on a local road maintained by dedicated county, town, and village**

transportation workers. Motorist safety and economic vitality depend on the condition of these roads and the state must step up and fund this key component of our infrastructure.”

Local roads and bridges account for 87 percent of the roads, 52 percent of the bridges, and 48 percent of the vehicle mileage logged in New York State.

In a letter to Governor Cuomo and legislative leaders, Senator Seward and his senate and assembly colleagues called for:

- A \$200 million increase in Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs) funding in the 2015-16 budget;
- Creation of a five-year dedicated \$500 million (\$100 million per year) “State Aid to Local Bridges and Culverts Program” to address local priorities.

Senator Seward was joined by county and town highway superintendents from across New York at a Capitol news conference announcing the call for additional state funding.

“One of the keys to attracting new employers to New York state is to make sure our infrastructure is ready to accommodate growth and we need to start with our local highways. By improving our long neglected highways and bridges we will be able to grow jobs across the state,” Seward added.

Two years ago Senator Seward helped win an additional \$75 million in state funding for CHIPs, the first increase since 2008. That funding level was maintained in the 2014-15 state budget and was bolstered by a special \$40 million “pothole fund” to help municipalities make repairs following last year’s severe winter weather.

“For several years, upstate roads were neglected but in the last two state budgets I was able to fight for added CHIPs funding to help maintain and improve local highways without depleting county budgets. Now, with recent bank settlements, New York has a little more than \$5 billion in revenue to work with and it is time we commit to a long-term investment in our local infrastructure,”

Seward concluded.

