



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Reviving Route 219 Project Focus of Legislative Roundtable

CATHARINE YOUNG October 20, 2011

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BUFFALO – A completed Route 219 corridor would transform the economic potential for Western New York was the consensus among panelists who spoke at a special roundtable on Thursday that focused on finding solutions to complete the north-south expressway project.

Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean), joined by a delegation of bi-partisan lawmakers from Western New York, hosted the “Route 219: Road to Our Future” forum at the Mahoney State Office Building to hear from key transportation, labor, tourism, logistics, education,

banking, and health care officials on expanding the route.

“Governor Cuomo is making a big push for growing the economy in Western New York. Today we heard from experts in the field and community leaders who believe that completing Route 219 would play a major part in spurring job growth and economic development throughout the region. We need to refocus our attention on getting this project done,” said Senator Young.

A completed Route 219 will provide Western New York with a nationally significant north-south trade corridor connection from Toronto to Miami using 1,300 miles of completed interstate highways.

Completing approximately 20 miles of a four-lane highway from Springville to Interstate 86 near Salamanca in Cattaraugus County is the essential connection for the New York State portion of the route.

Senator Young said to achieve that, the state needs to restore funding for a \$6 million Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). However, amid the state’s economic woes, the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) announced in 2009 it was suspending work on the SEIS.

Last November, a 4.2-mile stretch of the Rt. 219 Southern Tier Expressway in New York – spanning from Springville to Ashford in Cattaraugus County – opened featuring nine new bridges.

“We are so close to being finished in New York and we need to rededicate ourselves to achieving the ultimate goal of having this entire route constructed. Not only will an improved and expanded route connect our region with new trade markets and job opportunities, it also will mean safer roads for travelers and greater access to education and

health care. This needs to be a top priority,” said Senator Young.

Senator George D. Maziarz (R, C – Newfane) said, “The importance of completing the Route 219 corridor cannot be overstated. As the Western New York economy continues to struggle in the face of a national economic downturn, this project is integral to the region on a multitude of levels. It is a crucial component of our infrastructure that must be completed.”

Senator Mark Grisanti (R- Buffalo) said, "We heard today from experts from Western New York who shared some promising ideas and concepts to help improve the expressway as we aim towards creating new jobs and developing our local economy. It is imperative that we complete this project to finalize this important corridor connection."

Senator Patrick Gallivan (R,C,I - 59th District) said, “The efficient flow of goods and people is essential to the economic resurgence of Western New York. A completed Route 219 will link our region with Toronto and the Southern United States, providing new opportunities for Western New York businesses. The experts gathered today reinforced the important need to expand and complete the Route 219 economic corridor.

Senator Tim Kennedy (D-58th District) said, “Infrastructure investment is a vital component of our efforts to grow the Western New York economy and create jobs,” said “By making strategic transportation investments, we can put Western New Yorkers to work, rebuild critical roadways and spark private-sector investment – all of which will lead to a stronger local and statewide economy.”

Assemblyman Joseph Giglio (R,C,I - Gowanda) said, “The completion of the Route 219 corridor has been a goal of government, community and business leaders in Western New York for many years. It is important that members of the State Legislature work with our federal Congressional delegation, as well as local government and business leaders, to assure the

completion of the Route 219 project. However, the solutions are becoming increasingly difficult because of the financial and economic problems that continue to face Federal, State and Local governments. The roundtable discussion that was held today illustrated that the completion of the Route 219 corridor is vitally important to our region.”

Assemblyman Robin Schimminger (D-C-I Kenmore) said, “Extending the Route 219 expressway via the Continental 1 plan would mean heightened tourist traffic, economic development and job growth for Western New York. Bringing this project to fruition would allow companies in Western New York and across the eastern United States and Canada to improve their access to Buffalo Niagara, Toronto, Pennsylvania and other points farther south thus getting products to market more quickly. Area residents would also have greater access to jobs, schools, services, and recreation venues, making this project vital to the region. I look forward to reviewing the ideas that come from today’s roundtable discussion and working with my colleagues to help move this project forward.”

Assemblyman Dennis Gabryszak said, “The Route 219 Expressway project is a way to spark economic growth in Western New York,” said. “This project has the capability to link our area with many other cities and give businesses and travel a direct route to our area. If completed, the 219 Expressway’s potential economic influence is both necessary and invaluable.”

Meg Lauerman, Project Manager for Continental 1, said, “Completion of Route 219 is a transformational project that will bring jobs to Western New York. The involvement of so many experts from the public and private sector here today demonstrates the wide support this project has in our region. We all appreciate the leadership and understanding that Senator Young and other area lawmakers bring to this issue.”

Jim Manno, Vice President Sales and Marketing for Sonwil Distribution Center that has been providing logistical and management solutions for companies at a regional, national and

international level for 65 years said a completed Route 219 will bring a needed boost to area businesses.

“Our company provides logistics solutions to companies and business in Western New York that want to grow. A significant logistical challenges they have right now is getting their products from point A to B in an efficient and cost effective way. Completing Route 219 will help growing business meet their potential and reduce costs on their everyday shipping and operating expenses,” said Mr. Manno.

Patrick J. Whalen, who is the Chief Operating Officer for Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, said a completed Route 219 is essential in not only providing patients with greater and more accessible health care, but also to help strengthen the health care industry.

"There are patients in the Jamestown and Olean areas that are more likely to go to Pittsburgh to get health care because there is no efficient route to Buffalo. A completed Route 219 will improve the quality of health care by making it possible to transport those in need of acute care to hospitals in Buffalo much more quickly and efficiently. Having a smooth and efficient four-way highway system is extremely important to our region's health care industry," said Mr. Whalen.

Dennis Eshbaugh, President and CEO of Holiday Valley Resort in Ellicottville, said, “The completion of Rt. 219 is vital to the economic future of the entire Toronto to Miami corridor. A functioning trade route allows for the efficient transportation of supplies and people, thereby enabling economic success in manufacturing and tourism in New York State.”

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