



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

State Representatives Pushing For Speedy Reopening of Old Route 219 Bridge

CATHARINE YOUNG January 6, 2012

ALBANY – Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I - Olean) will be meeting on Monday with Governor Cuomo’s office and local state representatives to advocate for the old Route 219 bridge to be reopened quickly.

The New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) closed the old Route 219 Bridge Thursday afternoon, citing structural problems found during an inspection last week. The inspection, conducted as part of a plan to rehabilitate the 50-year-old bridge, revealed a seized bearing, which DOT officials said compromised the safety of the bridge.

“The new development is disappointing, especially since we successfully pushed for an agreement to have the state fix the bridge and have each respective county maintain the approaches. The bridge and its future seemed to be secured before this happened,” Senator Young said.

Senator Young, who represents the Cattaraugus County side of the bridge, decided with Senator Patrick Gallivan (R,C,I - 59th District), from Erie County, to call the meeting.

Also invited are Senate Transportation Committee Chairman Charles Fuschillo (R-Merrick) and Assemblymen Joseph Giglio (R,I,C-Gowanda) and Kevin Smardz (R,I-Hamburg).

“Safety issues are paramount, and we don’t want anyone traveling on the bridge in danger. Local residents and small businesses heavily depend on having this bridge reopened and rehabilitated fast. We already have set aside \$3.8 million for this purpose. I want to ensure that the new structural deficiencies do not give the DOT an excuse to close the bridge permanently. About 2,500 vehicles use the bridge daily. Permanent closure is unacceptable.” said Senator Young.

“The Governor’s transportation staff need to understand that this bridge is vitally important to Western New York’s economy. I have heard from many residents who are concerned about the hardships this causes. Access to doctor appointments, work, groceries and emergency care all will be difficult,” said Senator Young.

“Also, in these very difficult economic times, traffic is the lifeline for any business. The DOT without notice turned the business district into a dead-end,” said Senator Young.

The bridge is expected to be closed for at least six weeks, resulting in a detour that routes all traffic over the new twin Route 219 bridges east of the old bridge. Area businesses have requested appropriate detour signs so they will not be impacted any more than necessary.

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