



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Senator Kennedy Urges DEC to Keep Zurbrick Road Project on Track

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY July 24, 2012

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After decade of delay, project is closer than ever to starting. Senator Kennedy, Supervisor Holtz, Mayor Hoffman want work to start this summer.

CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y. – “After a decade of delay, the DEC needs to get this project started this summer,” said Senator Tim Kennedy, urging the Department of Environmental Conservation to keep its Zurbrick Road project on track. Cheektowaga Supervisor Mary Holtz and Depew Mayor Steven Hoffman joined Kennedy in calling on the DEC to stick to a

summer 2012 start date for environmental remediation and bank stabilization work along Zurbrick Road.

The project is closer than ever to getting underway, but there are still some obstacles remaining before shovels can break ground. Zurbrick Road – which runs along Cayuga Creek – has eroded so drastically that it has been closed to traffic for several years. The crumbling road continues to gradually cave into the creek bed – which is threatening residents' safety and putting their property at risk.

Residents were hopeful at the end of last year when they heard that work was expected to begin this spring. Since then, the project has unfortunately encountered additional delays.

“Zurbrick Road homeowners have had to endure a decade of uncertainty, wondering whether or not their street and their properties would be protected from further erosion and an impending roadway collapse. Enough is enough. The DEC needs to get started on this long-delayed project,” said Senator Kennedy. “We’re closer than ever to seeing work start along Zurbrick Road, and we can’t let up now. Further delay will only increase costs and add to neighborhood frustrations. The DEC must keep this project on track and get shovels in the ground.”

Cheektowaga Supervisor Mary Holtz stated, “We are so close to bringing relief to the Zurbrick Road residents who have endured this terrible condition for so long. I thank Senator Tim Kennedy for keeping an eye on this project and encouraging the DEC to keep a timeline which will see work begin this summer.”

Depew Mayor Steven Hoffman said, “My patience with the Zurbrick Road issue has run out. It’s been a ten-year process. It is time for the DEC to act now.”

Several years ago, a significant portion of Zurbrick Road collapsed, as the Cayuga Creek bank eroded below it. The road was closed, and local municipal leaders were left searching for a fix. Unfortunately, they knew there was no easy solution to the problem.

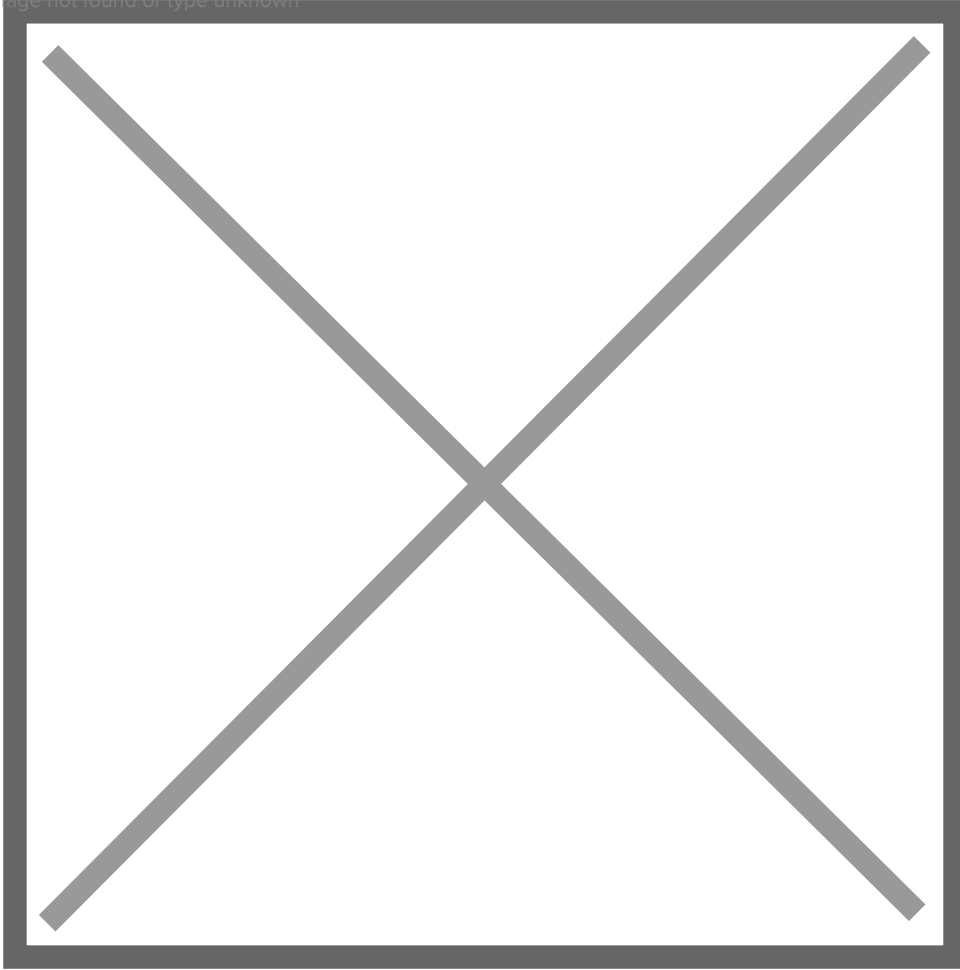
Efforts to stabilize the eroding Zurbrick Road stream bank began in 2001 when the Army Corps of Engineers started constructing a retaining wall along Cayuga Creek. Work was halted when they discovered hazardous waste materials at the site. The contaminated soil is the result of the 210,000 tons of solid waste that were dumped at the old Depew Village Landfill while it was in operation from 1940-61.

The project was referred to the DEC, which dealt with some initial delays related to cost concerns and then began studying different methods for cleaning up the site. In 2009, the DEC issued a proposal to clean up this contamination and stabilize the stream bank and Zurbrick Road slope. The site was labeled Class 2 in the DEC Inactive Hazardous Waste Site Program, so removal of this contamination and stabilization of the slope is absolutely essential.

Over the past several months, there has been significant progress. In December, the DEC informed residents that work was likely to start this spring. Since then, there have been some unexpected delays following a series of bid rejections and administrative setbacks. However, the project continues to move forward, and a potential bid is currently undergoing a required state review process. If the plan stays on track, the DEC says work could begin this summer.

Kennedy, Holtz and Hoffman are urging the DEC to expedite the long-delayed project. Once the DEC completes its remediation and bank stabilization project, the municipalities can begin reconstructing Zurbrick Road.

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Zurbrick Road resident Jim Burst raises concerns about stalled status of project.

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Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 58th District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, Eden, Hamburg and West Seneca, the city of Lackawanna and parts of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.