



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara, Palmesano applaud budget agreement to boost CHIPS funding for local roads and bridges

THOMAS F. O'MARA March 21, 2013

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Albany, N.Y., March 21—Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R-C, Corning), who in early March joined county and town highway superintendents and other local leaders from across New York to call for increased state support for local roads and bridges, applauded today's announcement that the final 2013-14 state budget will include a \$75 million increase in funding for the Consolidated Highway

Improvement Program (CHIPS).

CHIPS provides the bulk of state aid to counties and towns for the maintenance and improvement of local roads and bridges.

“We’re extremely pleased that the new state budget will include a reasonable state-level increase in CHIPS funding. It’s going to make a real difference for our localities, motorist safety statewide, and so many local economies,” O’Mara and Palmesano said in a joint statement. “The improvement and maintenance of local roads and bridges puts taxpayer dollars to wise use. It’s a smart state investment that will have a positive impact on New York’s short- and long-term strategies for job creation and economic development. These roads and bridges are economic lifelines in local communities and absolutely critical to the overall quality and strength of New York’s leading tourism industry.”

At an Albany news conference on March 6, O’Mara, Palmesano and a bipartisan group of their legislative colleagues noted that CHIPS funding has remained stagnant since 2008. The governor had proposed holding CHIPS funding flat at \$363.1 million in his proposed 2013-14 state budget. The legislators and local highway superintendents called for a CHIPS funding increase of \$100 million, from \$363.1 million to \$463.1 million, by reallocating a portion of the governor’s proposed \$300 million for the NY Works fund for improving state-maintained roads, bridges and other infrastructure.

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

A recent report from State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, “Cracks in the Foundation,” called 32% of New York’s local bridges deficient and 40% of local roads fair or poor, and getting worse.

O'Mara and Palmesano were joined in their call to increase CHIPS funding by nearly 70 other senators and Assembly members. The legislators joined in signing a letter to the governor, legislative leaders and top Cuomo administration officials, part of which read: "We all believe an improved infrastructure is vital to advance and foster economic development and job creation. However, we also believe that investment and commitment must be made not just at the state level, but the local level as well. We have continually emphasized working together and partnering to solve major challenges in our state. We believe this is an opportunity and a responsibility we have to partner with our local communities by pledging our support to share our increased transportation and infrastructure investment with our local governments."