



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senate Begins Passing Important Budget Bills

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Sunday's bills focused on transportation, economic development capital projects, environmental conservation, and public protection

ALBANY - Driving to achieve an early state budget, the Senate began passing budget bills on Sunday.

"The Senate is working to get the job done. I expect we will have passed all of the bills in our house by Wednesday," said Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean).

Speaker Sheldon Silver is not convening the Assembly until Thursday. The state budget is due every year by March 31, and Governor Cuomo had set a goal to have everything completed early this year. For the past two years, the state budget has been passed on time. If the budget is early, it will be for the first time in about 30 years, she said.

Senator Young said that the legislation passed by the Senate so far addresses crucial areas of funding, including transportation, economic development capital projects, environmental conservation, and public protection.

"Our local governments and taxpayers especially will benefit from the transportation initiatives. Towns, villages and counties have been struggling to fix their roads. For the first time in five years, the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) will be increased for maintenance and construction of local highways. It will give financial relief to municipalities, take pressure off local taxpayers, renew our infrastructure, and grow jobs and the economy," she said.

Senator Young, who serves on the Transportation Budget Subcommittee that negotiated the final result, said the Senate led the charge to boost CHIPS funding by \$75 million, totaling \$430 million. The Governor's original proposal held CHIPS flat, while the Assembly Speaker only advocated for a \$15 million increase.

Capital road and bridge funding for upstate was funded at \$1.4 billion, and Senator Young said that taxpayers will see many projects underway across her district once the weather breaks.

In addition, freight rail and aviation were allocated \$10 million apiece.

Other economic growth measures include \$53.89 million to upgrade Ralph Wilson Stadium, which guarantees the Buffalo Bills to stay in Western New York for the next 10 years.

"Investing in the Bills is worthwhile. The state and region see a great deal of revenue and economic benefits from having the team in Western New York, including personal income tax from the players' salaries, and sales tax.

"Bills fans will be thrilled to keep their beloved team. Now we just need a winning season," Senator Young said.

The Regional Economic Development Council capital fund was increased to \$162 million to grow more jobs.

The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) was increased to \$19 million to benefit farmers, research, parks, waterways and other initiatives to protect the environment, according to Senator Young, who also served on the Agriculture and Environmental Conservation Budget Subcommittees.

"We are off to a great start. There is much more to do, and the Senate will achieve our goal of passing a responsible budget that provides tax relief to families and seniors, and grows jobs and the economy," she said.