



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins: Local Governments Need Highway Aid Increase as Part of This Year's State Budget

JACK M. MARTINS March 5, 2014

| ISSUE: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Additional Funding Needed to Address Growing Infrastructure Needs & Increased Road Damage from Harsh Winter Weather

With the harsher than normal winter weather causing significant damage to roadways, Senator Jack Martins (R-Mineola) is calling for a \$50 million increase in highway funding to local governments as part of the 2014-15 state budget.

“Roads maintained by local governments sustain over 63 billion vehicle miles of travel, and many are in desperate need of repair. That’s only being made worse by the terrible winter weather we’ve been having. Some roads have so many craterous potholes it’s like driving on the surface of the moon. Fixing them will add further costs to local governments who are facing their own fiscal difficulties. Municipalities need additional resources to maintain and improve their roads, and the state budget should provide that to them,” said Senator Martins, Chairman of the Senate’s Local Government Committee.

Statewide highway funding for local governments is provided through the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs). Last year’s CHIPs funding level was \$438.1 million, and marked the first funding increase for the program in five years. The Executive’s 2014-15 budget proposal did not include a CHIPs funding increase.

Fluctuating temperatures combined with higher than normal precipitation has led to more potholes and road damage which must be repaired. On top of that, localities are already dealing with a crumbling transportation infrastructure. A 2012 report released by the State Comptroller's Office estimated \$175 billion in transportation infrastructure needs over the next 20 years, with much of this for the already deteriorating local transportation system.

In addition, Senator Martins called for the creation of a new dedicated, \$200 million "State Aid to Local Bridges and Culverts Program" to help address locally designated priorities statewide.

87 percent of the roads in New York State and 50 percent of the bridges in New York State are maintained by local governments, according to the New York State County Highway Superintendents Association.

"Mother nature has taken its toll on our roadways this winter season," said Nassau County Executive Ed Mangano. "My administration has an aggressive program to fill potholes throughout Nassau in order to maintain the highest level of safety for vehicles and pedestrians on County roads. However, we all know that in order to keep programs like this going it takes funding and I applaud Senator Jack Martins for spearheading the effort to increase highway aid for local municipalities after this harsh winter."

"With the high volume of winter storms this season, the Town's first priority has been clearing our roads and filling potholes to ensure the safety of our residents. In order to continue providing this critical service, appropriate funding is necessary. Any assistance the state can provide to addressing our infrastructure needs would benefit us greatly. Thank you to Senator Martins for this proactive effort in securing funds for local governments," said Town of North Hempstead Supervisor Judy Bosworth.

“Senator Martins has once again demonstrated his commitment to supporting our local governments,” said Nassau County Legislator Rose Walker. “This winter has been so tough with all the snowstorms, followed by warm temperatures melting snow, only to freeze again at night. Our local Public Works and Highway Departments have been working so hard to keep up, and they are doing the best job that they can, but they need more support. I want to thank Senator Martins for working to ensure that they have the resources they need to repair our roads and keep us safe as we travel day-in and day-out.”

“Senator Martins’ proposal recognizes that we are in crisis mode on literally every street on Long Island. This winter has shattered many of our roads, creating a moon scape on thoroughfares that carry commerce, commuters and our children. His effort to put additional dollars to work on behalf of our infrastructure should be supported by everyone and anyone who gets behind the wheel,” said Long Island Contractors’ Association Executive Director Marc Herbst.