



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo Calls On Feds For Freeze Funding Fix

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO March 26, 2014

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ALBANY – Sen. Joseph A. Griffo called on the federal government to help New York fix its aging infrastructure after years of underfunding and this past winter’s extreme conditions.

“The Times-Union **recently declared** this ‘the worst winter in years for potholes and general road decay’ – and I couldn’t agree more,” said Griffo, R-Rome. “It’s simple ‘frozenomics.’ Local governments maintain roads that sustain more than 63 billion miles of travel. Governments at all levels have underfunded the upkeep of those roads. Now motorists are paying for it.”

Griffo noted that this year’s deep freeze has created major pothole issues. TRIP, a transportation-focused research group, estimates each driver in America pays an additional

\$377 annually for repairs solely because of crumbling roads.

“These unanticipated repairs would be on top of skyrocketing energy costs that New Yorkers are paying to keep warm,” said Griffo. “Frankly, it’s a one-two punch that has left many hard-working people reeling this winter. They deserve relief.”

In letters, Griffo has asked Reps. Richard Hanna and William Owens, as well as U.S. Sens. Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand to consider creating a special highway fund for exclusive use of states experiencing extreme winter weather. The federal transportation bill, which includes highway funding, is in the process of being re-negotiated. The current version expires Oct. 1.

Griffo likened the request to states that receive federal funds for other weather-related events.

“California received an additional \$183 million in federal funds to combat widespread drought. Colorado received an additional \$199.3 million to repair damage from last fall’s mudslides,” wrote Griffo. “If the federal government can come up with funds to help these states with their weather-related disasters, then surely it can do the same for cash-strapped highway departments in New York.”

On the state level, Griffo is supporting a \$50 million increase in Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs) funding and the creation of a \$200 million fund for local bridges and culverts.