



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Senate Passes Griffo Bill To Help Lower Local Costs for Highway Maintenance

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO April 29, 2014

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ALBANY – The New York State Senate passed a bill Monday that would benefit local highway departments by reducing its costs and its legal liabilities.

Senator Joseph A. Griffo is sponsor of the bill ([S.1965](#)), which would amend highway law to create a new definition: a low-volume road, which would apply to roads where less than 400 vehicles drive daily.

The bill would save municipalities money by allowing their highway departments to perform less maintenance, such as plowing and grading, on these less utilized roads.

The New York State Local Roads Research and Coordination Council established standards for low-use roads in 1992, which towns have been using ever since. These standards, however, do not have the authority of state law.

“In the Tug Hill region, a highway department consumes 70 to 90 percent of a municipal budget,” said Griffo, R-Rome. “Municipalities simply cannot afford to design, construct and maintain these less-traversed roads to other state or national design standards for regular roads. By putting these standards into state law, we’re helping to keep costs low – which helps the taxpayers.”

The Mandate Relief Redesign Team ([PDF](#)) included this idea in its first report to the governor. It was also a [recommendation](#) of Senator Patricia A. Ritchie’s Mandate Relief Working Group. The proposal is supported by the state Department of Transportation, the Tug Hill Commission and environmental groups.

“This bill preserves public input before road changes are made and will have no effect on property assessments,” said Griffo. “It will also help municipalities maintain access to forest lands, recreational areas and agricultural sites without making unnecessary and costly changes to the environment. I’m pleased to help local governments find a way to reduce costs whenever possible.”

The bill ([A.1407](#)) now awaits action in the Assembly, where it is sponsored by Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther, D-Forestburgh, and co-sponsored by Assemblyman Ken Blankenbush, R-Black River; Claudia Tenney, R-New Hartford and Will Barclay, R-Pulaski, among others.