



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Reopened Rest Areas Enhance Safety for I-88 Travelers

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ONEONTA, 03/09/17 -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) announced today that the fully rehabilitated Wells Bridge rest area on Interstate 88 westbound between exits 12 and 11 has reopened joining the previously reopened Worcester rest area eastbound between exits 18 and 19. Seward secured state budget funds to rehabilitate and reopen both the Wells Bridge and Worcester rest areas after they were shuttered by the state.

“When the rest area closures were first announced in 2010, I joined with the motoring public in voicing opposition,” said Senator Seward. **“Closing these rest areas compromised public safety and sent a message that New York State was dilapidated and rundown. I fought hard to secure state budget funding to reopen both the Wells Bridge and Worcester rest areas because they are vital components of our highway system and safe havens for those who drive for a living as well as everyday travelers.”**

New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Matthew J. Driscoll said, “Governor Andrew Cuomo knows that transportation supports mobility, commerce and economic growth. With this investment in the Wells Bridge Rest Area, we are enhancing the safety of I-88, giving travelers another place to rest, text and take a break from driving.”

Trucking Association of New York President Kendra Hems said, “From the moment the Department of Transportation announced the closure of six rest areas in 2010,

Senator Seward began working to get them reopened. We are grateful for his commitment to getting the rest areas in his district reopened and hope it sets a precedent to get the remaining four closed rest areas opened as well. It is important that commercial drivers, who must take time off to rest during their shifts, have safe and secure parking available to them. The Trucking Association of New York will continue to advocate to get all remaining closed rest areas open, as well as work on increasing truck parking locations across the state.”

In 2010, six New York State Department of Transportation rest areas on interstate highways were closed as a cost saving measure. Senator Seward objected to the closings and joined local officials and transportation advocates to press for their reopening. To date, only the Worcester and Wells Bridge rest stops have reopened.

The 2014-2015 state budget included funding secured by Senator Seward to restore and reopen the Worcester rest area. The project included resurfacing the parking lot and walkways, installing new pavement markings and upgrading signs. That work was completed in November 2014 and the rest area parking was reopened.

In 2015, the Worcester restroom building was modernized with the installation of new plumbing, electric, septic and heating/air conditioning systems, a new water supply and treatment system and new doors and windows. Bathrooms were remodeled to provide ADA-compliant stalls. A new emergency backup generator also was installed. The fully rehabilitated Worcester rest area was reopened on November 5th, 2015.

Senator Seward secured an additional \$2.5 million in the 2015-2016 state budget to perform the same work at the Wells Bridge rest area. Work began in the summer of 2015 and the parking area was reopened on November 5, 2015. Today, the fully rehabilitated Wells Bridge restroom building is also open.

The New York State Office of General Services was responsible for the design and construction of both facilities.