



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Job Complete: Kennedy Announces Installation of Canalside Signage on I-190 & Rt. 5 in Buffalo

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY May 10, 2017

| ISSUE: **CANALSIDE, BUFFALO, HIGHWAYS**

Following Letter from Kennedy, NYSDOT Commissioner Agreed that Canalside District Qualifies for “Traffic Generator” Signage

New Signs Suggest Visitors Take Exit 6 from I-190 to Reach Canalside

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Kennedy announced today that signage directing visitors to Buffalo’s popular Canalside district has been installed on I-190 and Rt. 5 in the City of Buffalo. The signs, directing Canalside visitors to Exit 6 on I-190, were installed after Kennedy penned a letter last year to the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the Thruway Authority (NYSTA) requesting that they explore options of how to better direct visitors to Canalside. Noting that numerous other area attractions, such as New Era Field, Coca-Cola Field, and KeyBank Center have highway signage, Kennedy stressed that area state highways should highlight a district that has benefited from millions of dollars in state funds. The project required cooperation among multiple agencies, with Canalside run by the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation, NYSDOT, which controls Rt. 5, and NYSTA, which controls I-190.

“I want to thank NYSDOT Commissioner Matt Driscoll, NYSTA Executive Director Bill Finch, and of course Governor Andrew Cuomo for helping to improve our area roadway signage,”

said Senator Kennedy. “Each year, Canalside breaks a new attendance record, and out-of-town publications continue to rave about Buffalo’s growing waterfront destination. With the installation of these new signs, out of town visitors will no longer have to play the guessing game when deciding which Downtown exit to take to Canalside.”

Back in July, Kennedy stood at Canalside with Buffalo Sabres Vice President of Administration and General Manager of HARBORCENTER Michael Gilbert and Visit Buffalo Niagara President & CEO Patrick Kaler to highlight the importance of wayfinding signage for out of town tourists who want to visit Canalside.

“The Canalside district has become one of our region’s top destinations, and it is very appropriate that the Department of Transportation has recognized the importance of its cultural and recreational facilities,” said Michael Gilbert, Buffalo Sabres vice president of administration and general manager of HarborCenter. “It is important that visitors are able to easily navigate Canalside’s surrounding roads, and the collaboration of Sen. Kennedy, Tom Dee and ECHDC, and state DOT and Thruway Authority have helped to ensure that motorists who are unfamiliar with the route are properly directed.”

“These new signs will be very helpful to first-time visitors who are seeking out our revitalized waterfront this summer,” Visit Buffalo Niagara President and CEO Patrick Kaler said. “We’re grateful to Senator Kennedy and all our state officials who continue to make tourism and visitor friendliness in Buffalo a priority.”

The text of Kennedy’s letter from July is below:

July 12, 2016

<p>Bill Finch, Executive Director</p> <p>New York State Thruway Authority</p> <p>200 Southern Blvd.</p> <p>P.O. Box 189</p> <p>Albany, New York 12201-0189</p>	<p>Matthew J. Driscoll, Commissioner</p> <p>New York State Department of Transportation</p> <p>50 Wolf Road</p> <p>Albany, New York 12232</p>
<p>Thomas Dee, President</p> <p>Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation</p> <p>95 Perry Street, 5th Floor</p> <p>Buffalo, New York 14203</p>	

Dear Executive Director Finch, Commissioner Driscoll, and ECHDC President Dee,

I write to respectfully request that ECHDC, NYSDOT and NYSTA work together to design and install highway signage throughout Western New York directing tourists and nearby residents to Buffalo's new premier destinations: Canalside and HARBORCENTER. It was recently brought to my office's attention by a constituent who noted that unlike most cities, and unlike most major local attractions, there is little to no signage on major highways in Western New York directing travelers to Canalside.

With numerous state highways, including I-190, NY 33, and NY 5, delivering tens of thousands of vehicles to Buffalo's downtown area, it only makes sense that clear signage be erected

directing travelers to the best exit towards Canalside. This signage would not be without precedent. For instance, I-190 features signage directing travelers to Downtown Buffalo, the Buffalo Outer Harbor, Coca Cola Field, and the First Niagara Center, and Route 33 includes signs for the Buffalo Science Museum. Meanwhile, Route 5 features signs for Woodlawn Beach State Park; NY 179 directs drivers towards the Ford Stamping Plant entrance; and Route 219 notifies travelers of the exit for and direction to the Ralph Wilson Stadium.

New York State has invested millions of dollars into making Canalside one of Buffalo's most popular destinations, with visitors from all over praising the improvements to our city's waterfront. Additionally, the Pegula family has spent hundreds of millions of dollars transforming an old parking lot into one of North America's premier hockey destinations. The recent National Hockey League Draft underscored the importance of this site as a major catalyst of tourism in the region, bringing tens of thousands of visitors who spent millions of dollars in our local economy. With more and more drivers and especially newcomers unfamiliar with the area coming to Canalside from Canada, Pennsylvania, and Buffalo's outer suburbs, it is important that these visitors find their destination easily, quickly and safely.

Again, I respectfully request that ECHDC, NYSDOT and NYSTA work together to create and install signage on state highways throughout the region directing visitors towards Canalside and HARBORCENTER. Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Should you have any questions or if I may be of assistance, as always, I welcome your call.

Sincerely,

Timothy M. Kennedy

New York State Senator, 63rd District