



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Sen. Griffo: AIM funding cuts must be restored

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO January 28, 2019

UTICA – State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, is calling for the restoration of Aid to Municipalities (AIM) funding that Governor Andrew Cuomo has proposed cutting in his Executive Budget.

Localities relying on AIM funding for their budgets would see that funding completely eliminated as part of the Governor's proposal. Cities, which receive the majority of AIM funding, would not be affected, nor would localities where AIM funding accounts for 2 percent or more of their municipal budget.

Altogether, there would be \$59.2 million in cuts to the AIM program as part of the Governor's proposed budget. The Association of Towns of the State of New York estimates that, altogether, towns and villages within the Senator's district could lose approximately \$1.7 million in AIM funding.

"As a former mayor, I understand and have seen the impact that AIM funding can have on municipalities and am disappointed that the Governor has proposed these devastating cuts that so many communities within my district rely on in order to provide essential and needed services to residents," Sen. Griffo said. "One of my concerns with these cuts is the potential that affected local governments will be forced to shift more of the tax burden onto the shoulders of residents to make up for the loss in revenue. Raising taxes is not how we

make our state more affordable for residents and businesses. Since our local governments already do more with less, we should be helping them by increasing CHIPS funding, restoring AIM and exploring how consolidation and shared services could be beneficial.”

"When it comes to local governments and the property tax, the Governor's budget fails to abide by its theme of 'justice,' as it would eliminate state aid for the vast majority of New York's smallest local governments," New York Conference of Mayors Executive Director Peter Baynes said. "If the goal this legislative session is to enact progressive tax reform, it will not be achieved by cutting local aid and removing municipalities' ability to follow through on their goal to reduce the regressive property tax burden. In the days since the release of the budget, we've seen a strong swell of support for local governments, including from state legislators like Senator Griffo, and opposition to these harmful cuts. NYCOM will continue to fight for the restoration of and increase in AIM funding in order to preserve the essential municipal services funded by this aid, and protect New Yorkers from state- induced increases in the regressive local property tax."

"With the Governor's proposed evisceration of the AIM program for virtually all towns and villages, New York's municipalities, and by extension taxpayers, stand to suffer a real blow," said Gerry Geist, Executive Director of the Association of Towns of the State of New York. "Beyond the fact that local officials have already developed budgets that account for this annual boost of state revenue, the budget office's argument that there is money to be had from the internet sales taxes or that towns have healthy reserve funds represents a fundamental misunderstanding of local revenue disbursement. It is the counties that collect sales taxes, and they are not generally required to share those revenues with towns. Furthermore, reserve funds are not for operating expenses and are the fruit of years of meticulous spending, sharing services and responsible fiscal planning by towns. To strip our towns and villages of state aid that they have come to rely upon is a recipe for layoffs,

program and service cuts and further deterioration of our roads and infrastructure. The Association of Towns is calling for a full restoration of AIM funding to all towns and villages plus an increase to account for money lost due to inflation from years of flat funding levels. Our members are so frustrated, and rightly so; these AIM cuts feel like a punishment despite years of diligent spending.”

Sen. Griffo also has sponsored and supported legislation that would reduce mandated costs and other expenses that drive up local taxes for municipalities, school districts and their taxpayers. This includes a bill that would require that the state fund any state-mandated program imposed on municipalities and school districts.

While the legislation has passed the state Senate, it has not passed the state Assembly.

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