



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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O'Mara and Palmesano: Governor Cuomo, state Democrats deliver message that 'Local Roads Don't Matter'

THOMAS F. O'MARA April 1, 2019

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Albany, N.Y., April 1—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) today said that the new state budget enacted by Governor

Andrew Cuomo and the Legislature's Democratic majorities "pulls the foundation out from under local roads and bridges throughout this state."

In a joint statement, O'Mara and Palmesano said, "It didn't take long for Governor Cuomo and a State Legislature under one-party, Democratic control to show their true colors. In a state budget allocating hundreds of billions of dollars, including billions of dollars alone for downstate mass transit, state Democrats cut funding for one of government's fundamental responsibilities, which is the improvement and maintenance of local roads and bridges. This budget delivers state government at its worst. It pulls the foundation out from under local roads and bridges throughout this state. It turns its back on local infrastructure, local economies, local property taxpayers, and local motorists. It's a disgrace."

[Watch Senator O'Mara's comments on the Senate floor]

The final 2019-2020 state budget adopted earlier today includes no additional funding for CHIPS base aid and cuts the \$65-million "Extreme Winter Recovery" allocation that has made a real difference for counties and local highway departments across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and statewide.

Earlier this year, over 600 local highway superintendents and highway department employees representing nearly every region of New York State rallied in Albany as part of the annual "Local Roads Matter" advocacy campaign. O'Mara and Palmesano have helped lead the campaign in the Legislature since 2013 and helped deliver significant funding increases over the past decade for local roads, bridges, and culverts through the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS).

This year the group called for increasing state base aid for CHIPS by \$150 million to a total of \$588 million. They also sought the restoration of a \$65-million "Extreme Winter Recovery" allocation enacted last year but not included in Cuomo's proposed 2019-2020 state budget.

In a March 4 letter to Cuomo and legislative leaders, O'Mara, Palmesano and their Senate and Assembly colleagues made the case for stronger state support, "Local governments, for the foreseeable future, will continue to struggle to address budgetary demands in the face of the state-imposed property tax cap, rising pension and health care costs, and unfunded state mandates, among other burdens. Furthermore, despite the state's increased commitment to CHIPS since 2013, base aid has remained stagnant over the past seven years. There is clearly a compelling case for New York State to take these proposed steps to address urgent local transportation and infrastructure shortcomings, and we believe it is simply the right thing to do. In order to meet the critical investment level needed to maintain and improve local roads, bridges, and culverts, a stronger state-local partnership is the only answer."