



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara and Palmesano welcome restoration of 'Extreme Winter Recovery' funding for local roads

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 21, 2019

| ISSUE: **LOCAL ROADS AND BRIDGES**



Albany, N.Y., June 21—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) today applauded the restoration of \$65 million in state “Extreme Winter Recovery” funding to assist counties, towns, and villages regionally and throughout New York maintain and repair local roads and bridges.

The critical funding, which has been allocated annually over the past several years through the state’s Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Programs (CHIPS), was left

out of the 2019-20 state budget enacted by Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Legislature's Democratic majorities. This year's final state budget adopted on April 1 included no additional funding for CHIPS base aid and cut the \$65-million "Extreme Winter Recovery" allocation that has become invaluable to municipalities.

O'Mara and Palmesano, who over the past decade have worked closely with county and town highway superintendents to build the "Local Roads Matter" advocacy campaign, have been highly critical of the cut.

In a joint statement, O'Mara and Palmesano said, "The elimination of this year's 'Extreme Winter Recovery' allocation pulled the foundation out from under local roads and bridges throughout this state. We are glad it's been restored because it is the absolute right thing to do. In a state budget allocating billions of dollars, including billions of dollars alone for downstate mass transit, local roads and bridges should always be a top priority. One of state government's fundamental responsibilities is the improvement and maintenance of local roads and bridges. This 'Extreme Winter Recovery' restoration is critical but now we need to get back to work on making the case that this state needs to make a stronger investment in local transportation infrastructure for the sake of local communities, economies, motorists, and property taxpayers. We look forward to continuing this work."

The restored winter recovery funding was included in legislation (S6616/A8434) that the Senate approved late last night. The Assembly approved it earlier this morning.

In March, over 600 local highway superintendents and highway department employees representing nearly every region of the state rallied in Albany as part of the annual "Local Roads Matter" effort. O'Mara and Palmesano have helped lead the campaign in the Legislature since 2013 and have delivered significant funding over the past decade for local

roads, bridges, and culverts.

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."