



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

## Assemblyman Zebrowski Calls for Immediate Repairs to Overpasses Along the Palisades Parkway

DAVID CARLUCCI November 7, 2019

| ISSUE: **PALISADES PARKWAY OVERPASS, PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**



Today, Assemblyman Ken Zebrowski stood with Senator David Carlucci, Clarkstown Supervisor George Hoehmann, Rabbi Paul Kurland and Co-President Gail Kaiser of the Nanuet Hebrew Center to push for overdue, necessary repairs to overpass bridges along the Palisades Interstate Parkway (PIP).

For two years, Zebrowski has been in contact with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and PIP regarding the deteriorating condition of these overpasses. The façade of the bridges along the highway are historic and made with stonework that is nearly one hundred years old. Decades later, the infrastructure is crumbling, leaving drivers at risk of falling rock.

Pedestrians have also been impacted by this – the bridge at Exit 10 near S. Little Tor Rd and Middletown Rd is particularly dangerous. Over the years, there have been complete closures of both sides of the sidewalk in order to remove stone from the bridge that was at risk of falling, leaving pedestrians with no way to get across the overpass. Today, only the eastern sidewalk remains open for access. Repairs to the façade have remained halted as DOT and PIP search for ways to keep the historic aesthetic and locate the specific stone that had been originally used.

These walkway closures not only affect the residents in the surrounding area, but severely impact the Rabbi and congregants of the Nanuet Hebrew Center. On Jewish holidays, observant residents that live south of the synagogue must walk to services and cross the bridge. It is especially concerning during the Sabbath, when families are traveling at dusk and the evening hours when it is very difficult to see. The sidewalk closure has put pedestrians and these congregants in an incredibly unsafe situation as they are forced to cross the busy intersection to get to the synagogue. This area was dangerous before the closures – a narrow opening with little shoulder, walkways that don't fully extend to either side of the road – however, this has amplified it.

“While I am incredibly supportive of efforts that look to preserve our history throughout the Town of Clarkstown and Rockland County, at a certain point, enough is enough. Barriers and cones that seem to have become permanent certainly do not match the historic aesthetic of these bridges. More importantly, pedestrians and the congregants of the Nanuet Hebrew Center are taking a risk each and every time they have to step off that overpass to cross the

street. It is time to put safety first, come to a reasonable solution, and finally get these overdue, necessary repairs done," said Assemblyman Zebrowski.

"The overpass is a threat to drivers because at anytime a stone could fall below. One of these stones could kill someone. We cannot wait for a horrific accident to happen. The NYSDOT needs to address this project and produce a timeline for their work," said **Senator Carlucci**.

"Thank you to Assemblyman Zebrowski for bringing us all together to call attention to the dangerous conditions on the Palisades Interstate Parkway crumbling overpasses and sidewalks. For two years, the NYSDOT has ignored this dangerous situation, not only for the residents of Clarkstown, but for the thousands of commuters and drivers that travel up and down the Palisades. I have seen firsthand the impact the closed sidewalks have had on the safety of the congregation of the Nanuet Hebrew Center, especially on holidays. The Clarkstown Police Department has worked closely with Rabbi Kurland to keep his congregants safe as they make their way to the Hebrew Center. It is unacceptable to continue to neglect the long overdue repairs that need to be made to both the overpass and the sidewalks," said Supervisor Hoehmann.

"As one who walks over this overpass several times a week, the State is ignoring a dangerous situation and not properly caring about the safety of its citizens; including many of us who need to walk the bridge as night and even during challenging weather conditions. With the winter approaching, this overpass will become even more difficult to cross. Let's remove these dangers immediately," said Rabbi Kurland.

"As Co-President of Nanuet Hebrew Center, it is my responsibility to speak out on behalf of all my fellow congregants. I am truly and totally concerned about their safety and well-being as they have to cross 3 lanes of oncoming traffic and are forced to traverse a wire mesh-backed bridge above the Palisades Interstate Parkway as they walk to and from our synagogue. This has been going on for over 2 years. Will it have to take a serious injury or a

pedestrian death to bring about the repair of this structure? It's long past time for the Palisades Interstate Park Commission and the Department of Transportation to work together to complete this project," said Gail Kaiser.