



# New York State Legislature

March 5, 2014

Hon. Andrew Cuomo  
Executive Chamber, State Capitol  
State Capitol, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Joan McDonald, Commissioner  
NYS Department of Transportation  
50 Wolf Road  
Albany, NY 12232

Hon. Dean Skelos  
Senate Temporary President &  
Majority Coalition Leader  
Room 904 LOB  
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Jeffrey Klein  
Senate Temporary President &  
Majority Coalition Leader  
Room 913 LOB  
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Senate Democratic Conference Leader  
Room 933 LOB  
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Sheldon Silver  
Assembly Speaker  
Room 932 LOB  
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Brian Kolb  
Assembly Minority Conference Leader  
Room 933 LOB  
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Joseph Morelle  
Assembly Majority Leader  
Room 926 LOB  
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Joseph Robach  
Senate Transportation Committee  
Room 803 LOB  
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. David Gantt, Chairman  
Assembly Transportation Committee  
Room 830 LOB  
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Governor Cuomo and Legislative Leaders:

Once again this year we appreciate and welcome the opportunity to contact you directly, on behalf of local transportation leaders from throughout our respective legislative districts and across New York State, concerning the future of our local roads, bridges and culverts.

As you know, one of the true highlights of last year's enacted state budget, an achievement which we can proudly point to as having made a great difference for so many communities, economies and motorists statewide, was the long-overdue increase in state funding for the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) -- the first increase in five years.

Consequently, as discussions on the 2014-15 state budget continue, we believe it is critically important to take the opportunity this year to build on last year's renewed commitment and, by doing so, begin to even more adequately meet the still-unaddressed deficiencies as well as the ever-growing challenges and concerns facing local roads, bridges and culverts within every region of New York State.

Very simply, we believe a stronger state commitment to our locally maintained transportation infrastructure in this year's final budget is not only warranted and feasible, but one that's imperative to fully realizing so many of the local economic, fiscal and community enhancement and improvement goals we share.

Therefore we are proudly joining together with local leaders to urge support this year for a two-pronged strategy to address critical and fundamental short- and long-term priorities for rebuilding, repairing and revitalizing local transportation infrastructure into the kind of system our citizens, our communities and our motorists deserve.

First, we seek a \$50-million increase in CHIPS funding, specifically an increase from last year's level of \$438.1 million to \$488.1 million in the final 2014-15 state budget.

Secondly, we believe it's time – and the opportunity exists -- for New York State to undertake a bold, new multi-year investment in local bridges and culverts. We are proposing a dedicated, \$200-million "State Aid to Local Bridges and Culverts Program" to immediately address locally designated priorities statewide.

As mentioned previously, we believe we can achieve the above goals within the existing parameters of the 2014-15 Executive Budget proposal by redirecting and reforming New York State's current commitment to local transportation infrastructure. Funding for a \$50-million CHIPS increase and initial funding for a state aid to local bridge and culvert program could come from available capital funding appropriations proposed in the Executive Budget. We believe we can and should share a portion of this funding commitment with our local municipalities to meet the increased needs and challenges facing our local infrastructure. In addition, several estimates have shown the state receives several hundred million dollars per year into the General Fund from sales taxes on gas and diesel motor fuel sales. We believe we can work to reform the Dedicated Highway and Bridge Trust Fund to ensure a portion of these funds are deposited specifically to improve our local roads, bridges and culverts.

We believe there's a compelling case for New York State to take the steps we propose to address these urgent local transportation needs, including that:

- local governments are responsible for maintaining nearly 87 percent of the roads in New York State, and one-half of the state's 18,000 bridges;
- drivers on local roads contribute nearly half of the gas taxes collected in this state;
- 48% of the vehicle miles traveled in New York are on local roads, yet less than 12% of the taxes and fees paid to the state by these drivers go back to maintaining local roads;

- local highway departments continue to struggle from substantial losses (as much as 40%) in federal highway aid as a result of changes to the federal transportation program, MAP-21, which has benefited the state system at the cost of the local system;

- estimates by the State Comptroller, state Department of Transportation (DOT) and other independent studies show a large number of local road mileage is deteriorating and many local bridges in the state are rated structurally deficient or functionally obsolete;

- 32% of bridges are deficient and 40% of road pavements are rated fair or poor, and getting worse;

- the State Comptroller further estimates there will be \$89 billion in unmet local infrastructure needs over the next 20 years, with much of this shortfall on the already deteriorating local transportation system; and

- according to the analysis of the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways, the local highway system faces an annual funding gap of \$1.3 billion.

Adding to the alarming urgency of all of the above, we also have to recognize that local governments continue to struggle to address budgetary demands in the face of the property tax cap, skyrocketing pension and health care costs, unfunded state mandates, stagnant state Aid to Municipalities (AIM) and a proposed property tax freeze. It's little wonder that fully adequate, critical investments to improve local roads, bridges and culverts cannot be provided given the realities of the current state-local partnership.

In closing, we believe it's the right time to transform this critical sector of the state-local partnership in the ways we have outlined. The commitment and investments we are seeking to build on last year's foundation will further solidify our strong belief that "local roads matter." This newfound state commitment and investment will finally move us toward the fully safe and reliable local infrastructure we envision, and serve as a true catalyst for future economic development and job creation in our local communities.

As always, thank you for your careful consideration and we look forward to working with you to achieve these goals and make the 2014-15 New York State budget truly transformative for local transportation.

Sincerely,

## **Summary of Signatures for CHIPS/Bridge Funding**

### **Assemblymembers:**

Thomas J. Abinanti 92<sup>nd</sup> A.D.  
Will Barclay 120<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Kenneth D. Blankenbush 117<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Joseph Borelli 62<sup>nd</sup> A.D.  
Harry B. Branson 138<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Edward Braunstein 26<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
James Brennan 44<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Anthony Brindisi 119<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Marc W. Butler 118<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Kevin A. Cahill 103<sup>rd</sup> A.D.  
John D. Ceretto 145<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Jane L. Corwin 144<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Marcos Crespo 85<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Clifford W. Crouch 122<sup>nd</sup> A.D.  
Brain Curran 21<sup>st</sup> A.D.  
Michael DenDekker 34<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
David J. DiPietro 147<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Janet L. Duprey 115<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Gary D. Finch 126<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Michael J. Fitzpatrick 8<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Christopher Friend 124<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Sandra R. Galef 95<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Andrew Garbarino 7<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Joseph M. Giglio 148<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Andrew Goodell 150 A.D.  
Alfred C. Graf 5<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Aileen M. Gunther 100<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Stephan Hawley 139<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Edward Hennessey 3<sup>rd</sup> A.D.  
Andrew Hevesi 28<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Mark Johns 135<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Steve Kats 94<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Michael P. Kearns 142<sup>nd</sup> A.D.  
Ron Kim 40<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Kieran Lalor 105<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Charles Lavine 13<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Peter D. Lopez 102<sup>nd</sup> A.D.  
Donna A. Lupardo 123<sup>rd</sup> A.D.  
Chad Lupinacci 10<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
William Magge 121<sup>st</sup> A.D.  
Nicole Malliotakis 64<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
John T. McDonald III 108<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Thomas McKevitt 17<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
David McDonough 14<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Steven F. McLaughlin 107<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Joan L. Millman 52<sup>nd</sup> A.D.  
Michael Montesona 15<sup>th</sup>  
Francisco Moya 39<sup>th</sup> A.D.

Bill Nojay 133<sup>rd</sup> A.D.  
Robert C. Oaks 130<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Philip A. Palmesano 132<sup>nd</sup> A.D.  
Anthony H. Palumbo 2<sup>nd</sup> A.D.  
Amy R. Paulin 88<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Edward Ra 19<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Andrew P. Raia 12<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Sam Roberts 128<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Nily Rozic 25<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Addie Russell 116<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Sean M. Ryan 149<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Joseph S. Saledino 9<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Robin L. Schimming 140<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
James Skoufis 99<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Daniel Stec 114<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Philip Steck 110<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Albert Stripe 127<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
James N. Tedisco 112<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Claudia Tenney 101<sup>st</sup> A.D.  
Fred W. Thiele Jr. 1<sup>st</sup> A.D.  
Raymond Walter 146<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Harvey Weinsenberg 20<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
David Weprin 24<sup>th</sup> A.D.  
Kenneth P. Zebrowski 96<sup>th</sup> A.D.

### **Senators:**

Greg Ball 49<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Philp Boyle 4<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
David Carlucci 38<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Martin M. Dilan 18<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Hugh T. Farley 49<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Patrick Gallivan 59<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Joseph Griffo 47<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Mark J. Grisanti 60<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Ruth Hassell- Thompson 26<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
William J. Larkin Jr. 39<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Thomas W. Libous 52<sup>nd</sup> S.D.  
Elizabeth O. C. Little 45<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Carl L. Marcellino 5<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Kathleen Marchione 43<sup>rd</sup> S.D.  
Jack M. Martins 7<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
George D. Maziarz 62<sup>nd</sup> S.D.  
Michael F. Nozzolio 54<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Ted O'Brien 55<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Thomas O'Mara 58<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Michael Ranzenhofer 61<sup>st</sup> S.D.  
James L. Seward 51<sup>st</sup> S.D.  
Catharine M. Young 57<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Lee Zeldin 3<sup>rd</sup> S.D.