



Department of Transportation

**TESTIMONY OF MATHEW J. DRISCOLL, COMMISSIONER
NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BEFORE THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE FISCAL COMMITTEES
HAMILTON HEARING ROOM B, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
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INTRODUCTION

Chairperson Young, Chairperson Farrell, Chairperson Robach, Chairperson Marcellino, Chairperson Gantt and members of the Legislative Fiscal and Transportation Committees, thank you for this opportunity to discuss Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget as it pertains to the Department of Transportation (DOT) for the 2016-17 State fiscal year (SFY).

STATEWIDE PREPAREDNESS

The most important function of the Department is to ensure the safety of the traveling public. This is accomplished through conducting bridge safety assurance inspections; targeted and comprehensive bus, truck and freight rail inspections; providing traffic signal maintenance; and performing winter snow and ice control. Snow and ice control is one of the more challenging responsibilities for the Department given the unpredictability and volatility of weather patterns. Last year, on the heels of several years of extreme winter weather, Governor Cuomo directed State agencies to assess and strategically augment their capacity to more effectively respond to emergencies. To enhance DOT's capabilities, the Governor provided the Department with \$50 million for new winter storm equipment through the NY Responds initiative. This new equipment, including new graders; loaders; and plow equipment is being deployed in every region of the State, with an emphasis on areas that are typically hit the hardest by harsh winter conditions.

SFY 2016-17 EXECUTIVE BUDGET

Earlier this month, Governor Cuomo unveiled a bold and comprehensive \$22.1 billion Transportation Plan to modernize and enhance New York's transportation infrastructure, including historic investments in roads and bridges; freight goods movement; and upstate airports. Specific to the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Governor's proposal provides the framework for a new unprecedented \$20.1 billion five-year transportation capital plan. This new commitment builds on \$18.3 billion in core DOT funding by adding \$1.8 billion in new resources.

The Executive Budget provides significant new State investments during State Fiscal Year 2016-17 to improve New York's transportation system, enhance the system's resiliency, create jobs, and deliver record levels of operating aid for transit systems. The proposal includes more than \$4.3 billion in new

DOT capital program funding; an increase of 17 percent. Of that amount, more than \$3.0 billion in new funding is provided to support the Department's highway and bridge program. DOT's Budget also provides \$438 million in additional funding for local highway and bridge projects under the Consolidated Local Streets and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS); \$39.7 million for the local matching share of federally-aided projects under the Marchiselli program; and an unparalleled \$5.2 billion to support the operation of local transit systems, including increases for upstate transit.

The Governor has also highlighted several high-priority initiatives that will form the core of the State's Transportation Plan, many of which will provide local governments with unprecedented access to transportation funds. These proposed strategic investments include:

- PAVE-NY - A new \$1 billion initiative that will provide \$500 million to help municipal governments replace, rehabilitate and maintain vital local bridges and invest \$500 million in State-owned bridges;
- BRIDGE-NY - A new \$1 billion initiative that will invest \$500 million to pave local roads and \$500 million to pave State roads.
- A new \$500 million Extreme Weather Infrastructure Hardening Program to make safety and resiliency enhancements to roadways across the State, that have proven to be susceptible to flooding and other extreme weather related events; and
- A \$200 million Upstate Airport Economic Development and Revitalization Competition to accelerate investments in commercial passenger and cargo service airports.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

As a former Mayor, I recognize that local roads and bridges matter! Too often, however, local governments are forced to make difficult choices between repairing and replacing infrastructure. Working with local governments, the Department has revised its project planning and development policies so that municipalities can implement cost-effective project solutions. At the same time, the Department will work with municipalities to develop strong asset management practices through enhanced training, technical assistance and deployment of innovative technologies. By working cooperatively, investments in transportation infrastructure will facilitate economic growth; leverage private investment; and create new jobs in our communities.

CONCLUSION

In closing, let us not forget, the work we do is critical and the challenges we face are very real. Through open and continuous dialogue, collectively we will deliver the transportation system that our residents deserve and is necessary to maintain New York's position as the Empire State. I want to thank you for your time today and I am available to address any questions that you may have.