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**New York State County Highway Superintendents Association
New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways**
Joint Legislative Public Hearing on the
2017-2018 Transportation Executive Budget Proposal

Good afternoon Senator Young, Assemblyman Farrell and other members of the legislature. I am, Michael E. Boesel, President of the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways (NYSAOTSOH) and the town of Palmyra Highway Superintendent. With me representing the New York State County Highway Superintendents Association (NYSCHSA) is their Legislative Co-Chair, Rensselaer County Engineer Wayne E. Bonesteel, P.E. We appreciate this opportunity to submit testimony for your consideration as you review the Governor's 2017-2018 Executive Budget.

As you know, our collective membership is responsible for ensuring the safe operation of 87 percent of the state's public roads, half of its bridges and plowing not only our huge system but also over a quarter of the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT)'s roads. Every time there is a winter weather event, the hard working men and women on our local crews ensure New York's drivers get to and from work, homes, schools, hospitals and other destinations safely.

THANK YOU

We'd like to begin by thanking you, the members of the legislature for your steadfast support of local roads and bridges to replace, rehabilitate, pave and maintain state and local roads, and culverts. We are pleased that the state adopted a five-year DOT Capital Plan which included two new programs, PAVE NY and BRIDGE NY.

We understand nearly 500 applications for funding for bridge and culvert projects under BRIDGE NY were submitted by counties, towns, cities and villages throughout the state. In the Hudson Valley, the value of project applications is 5x the \$19.5M available. Upstate aggregate bridge requests came in at more than 2x the available \$108.7M while Upstate culvert requests total 6x amount available (\$20M) STATEWIDE. Based on these numbers, the need for additional bridge and culvert funding is justified.

EXECUTIVE BUDGET

We are pleased to see Governor Cuomo's SFY 2017-18 budget funds PAVE NY at \$100M for the local share of the program.

The Executive Budget holds for the fifth year the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) base level at \$438M. In 2013, the Legislature championed the last increase of \$75M. CHIPS, as you all know by now, is the financial lifeblood of any local highway department, distributing vital and reoccurring state funding through a formula to every local government in the state. While providing a reliable base amount of state funding for local roads and bridges, CHIPS funds fall short of what is needed to keep the locally-owned ailing and aging transportation system from falling further into a state of disrepair. The NYSDOT capital plan and Executive Budget freezes the base level for CHIPS at \$438M and \$39.7M for Marchiselli.

While funding for local roads and bridges remains flat in the Executive Budget it is imperative to note that the Governor proposes increasing the DOT's capital program spending this fiscal year by \$1.16B. His budget directs \$855M; nearly three quarters of these new funds to be spent on three projects in New York City. These three projects will receive more funding in the coming fiscal year than the PAVE NY and BRIDGE NY programs will distribute to 87 percent the state's roads and fifty percent of its bridges, over four years.

We're not here to create a rivalry between different parts of the state but instead to ask our legislators what basis the state is using to determine how highway and bridge funds are being distributed. Eight percent of the DOT's bridges and less than one percent of its roads are in New York City, yet this year the Executive Budget recommends spending nearly as much in the City as the Department would spend on Long Island, the Hudson Valley and Upstate combined.

According the DOT's latest annual Highway Pavement and Bridge Condition Report between 2013 and 2015 an additional 360 bridges became deficient, as the number of deficient bridges jumped from 5,542 to 5,902. To be clear, pavement and bridge conditions in our state are getting worse. Every single region in the state saw an increase in poorly rated bridges over the past two years – DOT Commissioner Driscoll's home region (Central NY/Region 3) had an additional 48 bridges move from good/excellent to fair/poor.

Again, we ask the Legislature and Executive to help us better understand the basis for distributing road and bridge maintenance funds. Last year PAVENY was initially thought to be distributed in the same manner as CHIPS which is formula driven based on a communities' road miles and traffic volumes. The final budget did not follow the CHIPS funding formula for PAVE NY. The state's 932 towns which maintain 70 percent of the pavements received only 29 percent of the PAVE NY funds or nearly \$32M less than they would have had the CHIPS formula been used.

We request the Legislature work with the Executive to increase CHIPS by \$150M to an annual appropriation of \$588M. We are also calling for an additional \$50M per year in local funding for BRIDGE NY and a greater amount of the total funding be allocated to culverts. We also request PAVENY funds be distributed by a lane mile/vehicle volume formula.

LOCAL SYSTEMS' NEEDS ARE GREAT

We've conducted our own needs study of the local transportation system. The analysis determined that on average local governments (excluding New York City) should be

spending \$2.32B annually on their highways and bridges. Currently these municipalities spend about \$1B annually on these facilities, leaving an annual shortfall of \$1.32B.

CONCLUSION

In previous years, even in tough economic times, the Legislature has responded to the dire conditions of the state's transportation systems and augmented CHIPS and other local transportation funding but more is required to reverse the deteriorating conditions of our local transportation systems and make significant progress in its rehabilitation.

We are urging support for a significant increase for the CHIPS program to help all municipalities in the state extend the life of our assets and maintain our vast system; and an adequately funded BRIDGE NY program that can continue to provide direct funding to local governments and add flexibility needed to address local conditions.

Our associations and the mutual constituencies and communities we serve appreciate the support of our state elected officials who partner with us to insure we all "get the job done" when it comes to providing the public with a safe and functional statewide transportation system; one that supports jobs and economic growth for our communities.

We look forward to continuing working with you to make more state funding and resources available to meet the critical needs of our local transportation systems.

Thank you.

February 15, 2017

