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New York State County Highway Superintendents Association New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways 2019-2020 Joint Legislative Transportation Executive Budget Hearing

Good morning, Senator Krueger, Assemblymember Weinstein and other members of the legislature. We would also like to welcome the new Transportation Committee Chairs, Senator Kennedy and Assemblyman Magnarelli. We look forward to working with you in your new roles. I am, Patrick Mahar, President of the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways (NYSAOTSOH) and Town of Denmark Highway Superintendent. With me representing the New York State County Highway Superintendents Association (NYSCHSA) is their President, Oneida County Commissioner of Public Works, Dennis Davis. We appreciate this opportunity to submit testimony for your consideration as you review the Governor's 2019-2020 Executive Budget especially how it relates to local transportation infrastructure.

First, thank you, the members of the legislature for your steadfast support of local roads, bridges and culverts. 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 over a quarter of the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT)'s roads. Every time there is a winter weather event, major snow accumulation, freezing temperatures and severe flooding in many areas of the state, all in the span of a few days last week -- the hardworking men and women on our local crews ensure New York's drivers get to and from work, homes, schools, hospitals and other destinations safely.

EXECUTIVE BUDGET

As you know, the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) 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. Yet, the Executive Budget holds the CHIPS base level at \$438M for the seventh consecutive year. In fact, 2013 was the last time the Legislature championed an increase in the CHIPS base, adding \$75M. 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 Governor's Executive Budget maintains \$39.7M for Marchiselli **but does not include the \$65M Extreme Winter Recovery money we received last year**. It also includes \$100M for PAVE-NY and \$100M for BRIDGE-NY.. Based on our system's needs our associations are urging your support for a \$150M increase in CHIPS and a restoration of the \$65M in Extreme Winter Recovery funding.

Our associations would also like to express our support for Part II of the Transportation, Economic Development and Environmental Conservation (TED) Article VII Bill which would increase penalties for assaulting highway workers and requires the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee to implement a public education and outreach program on the importance of highway work zone safety. Any provisions that will increase the safety of our highway department personnel is of the utmost importance.

NEW YORK'S ROAD SYSTEM IS THE BACKBONE OF THE STATE'S ECONOMY

According to the United States Census sixty-five percent of New Yorkers drive to work daily, six percent take buses and eighteen percent take subways and/or rail. With 7 out of 10 New Yorkers driving to work we believe it is critical that the automobile fees and gas taxes paid by these drivers go toward maintaining the state's roads and bridges. The Dedicated Highway and Bridge Trust Fund (DHBTF) which funds the New York State Department of Transportation and local CHIPS capital programs is insolvent. According to the Executive Budget the DHBTF will average nearly a half billion-dollar deficit annually from 2018 – 2022. Only a fraction of the driver fees being collected are being deposited in the DHBTF. In 2018 over \$3B was collected from drivers through just the Motor Fuel Tax, Motor Vehicle Fees and Petroleum Business Tax yet only \$1.8B of these driver fees were deposited into the DHBTF.

The Executive's proposed congestion pricing plan would direct all of the fees collected annually (estimated at \$1.5B) toward the MTA. We respectfully request the significant long-term capital needs of the state's vital highway system be simultaneously considered alongside any MTA capital funding. All transportation infrastructure throughout the state is in need of enhanced state investment.

LOCAL SYSTEMS' NEEDS ARE GREAT

The New York State Comptroller's studies indicate that a large number of road mileage is deteriorating and many bridges in the state are rated structurally deficient and functionally obsolete. According to a 2014 Comptroller's report, thirty four percent (34%) of bridges are deficient and forty-eight percent (48%) of road pavements are rated fair or poor and getting worse. The Comptroller estimates that 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.

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.

The CHIPS formula is based on local highway mileage (for all municipalities) and motor vehicle registrations (for counties and NYC). This formula allows the local highway superintendents and commissioners of public works, the experts in their localities to make decisions on what road, bridge and culvert rehabilitation and reconstruction is most important. Our associations urge that CHIPS, PAVE-NY, and EWR funding be distributed through the CHIPS formula. By using CHIPS as the funding mechanism every municipality across the state will benefit equitably.

BRIDGE NY

Round II of the local portion of BRIDGE-NY which includes the last two years' appropriation for the program made available \$250M designated specifically for local bridge and culvert work. In Round II, 259 bridge applications and 514 culvert applications were submitted by counties, towns, cities and villages throughout the state. In both Round I and Round II, the value of project applications far exceeded what was available for each region of the state.

Year	Amount \$ Available	Applications	Funded
2016	\$200M (\$20M dedicated to culverts)	Round I: 229 bridges, 366 culverts	93 bridge, 39 culverts
2018	\$250M (\$50M dedicated to culverts)	Round II: 259 bridges, 514 culverts	86 bridges, 79 culverts

Based on this experience, the need for additional bridge and culvert funding is clearly justified.

WHAT IS NEEDED NOW

In previous years, 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 (\$150M) over the Executive Budget for the CHIPS program to help all municipalities in the state extend the life of our assets and maintain our vast system, as well as the restoration of the \$65M Extreme Winter Recovery funding that has been provided for several years.

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.

January 30, 2019