



Office of the County Executive

Monroe County, New York

Adam J. Bello
County Executive

January 31, 2023

Honorable Helene E. Weinstein
Chair – Ways and Means Committee
New York State Assembly
Room 923 LOB
Albany, NY 12247
wamchair@nyassembly.gov

Senator Liz Krueger
Chair – Finance Committee
New York State Senate
Room 446 CAP
Albany, NY 12248
financechair@nysenate.gov

RE: Executive Budget 2024 – 2025

Dear Chair Weinstein and Senator Krueger:

Please accept this letter as my testimony regarding the proposed Executive Budget for New York State's 2024-2025 fiscal year. Our analysis of the proposed Executive Budget continues, and I hope to have an opportunity to meet with you in the future.

First, thank you for the attention you have shown to our previous year budget requests. Last year's increase in Medicaid reimbursement rates was particularly important since the County owns and operates a large long-term care facility. The increase helped offset the loss of our share of eFMAP federal reimbursement by administrative action.

This year, Monroe County and the City of Rochester have committed to a renewed spirit of collaboration, a strength of partnership not seen in decades. We are building on the legacy of the 40-year old Morin-Ryan Sales Tax agreement that provided the most extensive sharing of local tax revenue in the state. This landmark agreement is emblematic of our region's historic commitment to look at its own resources to solve its problems first before seeking assistance.

Much has changed in our region over the last 20 years. The major manufacturing economy that sustained local self-reliance has eroded. The economic security blanket and the thousands of good paying jobs that our former industrial base provided has nearly evaporated. This economic change has had consequences. For example, the City of Rochester is now home to three of the top five poorest ZIP codes in the state, all of which have the city's highest concentrations of minority residency and poverty.

We are, however, the heirs of the innovative spirit that propelled those 20th century institutions. This legacy includes excellent universities and cultural institutions critical to a healthy community. The entrepreneurs, scientist, engineers, and skilled workforce are now driving advances in manufacturing, food processing, communications, and other fields. Fully harnessing these assets will require help from the State. We cannot do this alone. With a growing interest in the Upstate economy, we are seeking the same support provided to our neighboring communities.

It is in this spirit that we respectfully present the attached list of our community needs and requests of the state. It represents an inventory of deferred needs neither the County nor the City can address on their own or only with local collaboration.

I would like to renew my request for an increase in the reimbursement rates for the Early Intervention Program. I believe this to be a crucial investment in our children at the very earliest stages of their development. What we spend now will significantly improve chances for these children to live their lives to the fullest and minimize the costs in the school setting.

Monroe Community Hospital (MCH) is a County operated long-term care facility. We join with the other Leading Age nursing homes in advocating for additional Medicaid funding along with the proposed revision of the reimbursement methodology. We oppose Executive's proposals to cut the Capital component of our reimbursement rate by 10% together with other unspecified cuts. Operating a publicly owned nursing home is an important community function for many reasons. MCH currently operates at a significant deficit. We need your to keep this worthy institution viable.

The following requests address our most pressing community needs.

General Government Support

Poverty Reduction Assistance (Operating: \$31 million in FY24-25) - As mentioned above, Rochester is home to three of the top five poorest zip codes in New York State. Equitably increasing our share of state operating assistance will greatly enhance our efforts to reduce poverty in Rochester. We recommend revisions to the Aid to Municipalities program formula to provide the City of Rochester with an equitable share of the programs funding.

We support and urge your approval of the Governor's proposal to provide \$50 million dollars in poverty reduction assistance to Rochester (\$25 million), Buffalo (\$12.5 million), and Syracuse (\$12.5 million).

Public Safety and Public Health

The Transformational Community Care Coordination (TC3) Project (Operating: \$15 million in FY24-25; and request of \$75 million for a 5-year commitment) – TC3 addresses the barriers to discharging complex care patients to skilled nursing facilities (SNF) and alleviates a backlog of patients in hospitals. This program was funded with federal ARPA dollars as a proof of concept with significant results, this funding would allow for the continuation of this project.

Public Safety and Public Service Emergency Radio Communications Redundant and Resilient Upgrades – (Capital \$36 million – Project Start - Q2 2024 and Completion - Q4 2027) Our Public Safety and Public Service Emergency Radio Communications lack redundant and resilient systems in the event of a natural or manmade disaster including cyber-attacks or targeted attacks against critical infrastructure. This project will resolve this critical problem.

The Executive budget proposal to provide project funding to counties would be a good beginning.

Economic and Workforce Development

Rochester Riverside Convention Center Expansion (Capital: \$270 million over 8 years) – Funding would expand the Joseph R. Floreano Rochester Riverside Convention Center, adding more than 60,000 square feet of exhibition space, a hotel to serve the facility, and create 3,260 jobs. This project is critical to

the survival of the Convention Center and downtown, especially when competing with other newer venues throughout New York State. The project will also bring more visitors and related economic activity to Downtown Rochester.

Multi-Modal Capacity Building Projects (Capital: \$42 million initial investment over 5 years) – The County funded a multi-modal study to provide an economic marketing assessment outlining the viability of expanding multi-modal freight services in the Monroe County Region. Initial feedback has promoted a cluster model focusing on three regions each of which focuses on a different primary mode of transit (air, rail, and trucking). This project has identified initial projects and investments that would require both public and private dollars, with initial investments for all three clusters estimated at \$210.1 million.

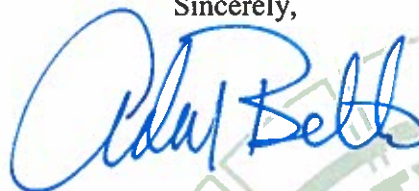
Shovel Ready Site Development - Henrietta Project (Capital: \$17M in SFY24-25) - The current RG&E distribution system lacks electricity capacity in the Town of Henrietta, this has resulted in a crisis that has effectively stopped future development. These funds would allow RG&E to make improvements to their system including adding a transformer to the substation. Without these improvements, current projects including 1,000 units of housing and roughly 600 acres of undeveloped land in Henrietta cannot be developed. This and other projects like it will be necessary for our community to benefit from the recent federal designation as “Regional Technology and Innovation Hub (Tech Hub).”

Critical Infrastructure Improvements

Aqueduct Reimagined and Riverfront Promenades (Capital: \$157.5 million over 6 years) – This ROC the Riverway project will reveal the historic Erie Canal Aqueduct and transform the Broad Street Bridge into a dynamic public space that uniquely celebrates the layered history and culture of Rochester. Construction of the adjoining riverfront promenades and multi-modal connections will facilitate seamless connectivity on both sides of the Genesee River.

These highlighted projects, along with the others we have shared with your staff, will position Rochester and Monroe County for a safer, healthier, and more prosperous future. We are asking for New York State to invest in our community, our residents, and our economy. We are grateful for your consideration as we continue to seek equitable support for our region.

Sincerely,



Adam J. Bello
Monroe County Executive

Attachment: (1) MC/CoR Joint NYS Requests Booklet