

**Testimony of Marie Therese Dominguez
Commissioner New York State Department of Transportation
Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on FY 2027 Budget**

Chairpersons Krueger, Pretlow, Cooney and Magnarelli and members of the New York State Legislature. On behalf of Governor Kathy Hochul, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about the Department of Transportation and the outstanding work we do to keep New Yorkers safe, on the move and enhance their quality of life.

It was another landmark year for the Department of Transportation as we continued to deliver on the promise of our historic, \$34.4 billion, five-year State Capital Plan, which, thanks to your continued support, is bringing improvements to every part of the state.

No Governor in the nation is doing more to invest in critical, transformative transportation infrastructure than Governor Hochul. She is literally laying the foundation for a brighter future by investing in people-focused projects that connect communities and create new opportunities for growth.

Evidence of this can already be seen in places like Syracuse, where nearly \$1 billion worth of construction has already been completed on the transformative Interstate 81 Viaduct Project. This project will remake the transportation landscape of Central New York, reconnecting downtown areas, making it more walkable and bikeable, while keeping people and the community at the heart of it all.

In New York City, the recently completed \$1.7-billion Hunts Point Access Improvement Project has streamlined access to the Hunts Point market - the largest food distribution center on the east coast - removing thousands of heavy commercial vehicles from local streets. Importantly, we connected the community in the South Bronx, creating new parks and recreational opportunities for residents to access and enjoy.

And in the Hudson Valley, we recently completed a \$25 million project to reduce flooding and improve resiliency at the Annsville Circle in Westchester County.

All total, the Department of Transportation improved nearly 4,000 lane miles along state and local highways; and replaced, rehabilitated or improved more than 3,600 bridges across the state last year.

This year, the Governor's proposed 2027 Executive Budget includes \$6 billion for the fifth and final year of our Capital Plan, including \$1.4 billion to improve local roads and bridges.

Bottom line is we are not slowing down. NYSDOT has already announced its most ambitious paving agenda ever for 2026. In addition to our core programs, the Department will invest an additional \$600 million in over 180 paving projects across the state. Taken together, this totals a nearly \$1.2 billion investment that will resurface more than 4,000 lane miles.

Road and bridge projects will be taking place in every corner of the state. They include:

- Replacement of the bridges carrying North Genesee Street over the Mohawk River and Erie Canal in the City of Utica.
- Replacement of the State Route 12B Bridge over the Oriskany Creek in Oneida County.
- Upgrade of the O'Rourke Lift Bridge over the Genesee River in Rochester.

- The resurfacing of portions of State Route 78 in the City of Lockport
- Construction of a Roundabout at the intersection of U.S. Route 9W and Oak Tree Road in Rockland County.
- The resurfacing and pavement restoration of several key roads on Long Island, including stretches of State Route 27A, Islip Avenue, and Northern Boulevard.

At the same time, we are keenly focused on enhancing safety. Our Safe Systems Approach Toward Zero Deaths is already seeing progress, as highway fatalities in New York fell by more than 10 percent in 2025 compared to the previous year.

This year, we will continue to work with our partners in New York City to reimagine the Cross Bronx Expressway as well as progress a study of the West Side Highway/9A corridor to identify potential enhancements.

In Buffalo, we continue to engage with the community on the development of a project to address the future of the Kensington Expressway corridor.

Here in the Capital Region, work is accelerating on the new Livingston Avenue rail bridge between Albany and Rensselaer – which includes a new shared use path across the Hudson River - and we are also moving forward with the environmental review process to reimagine the Interstate 787 corridor. Together, these two projects will help fulfill Governor Hochul's vision of a revitalized downtown Albany.

We also continue to look to the future as we work to complete our 2050 Transportation Master Plan which will help shape the development of New York's transportation infrastructure for the coming decades. These efforts will create a legacy for the Governor and this Legislature of a safer, more affordable and prosperous New York.

But DOT is more than just roads and bridges. Core to our multimodal investment approach is support for mass transit.

In addition to providing \$8.6 billion in total operating aid for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the 2027 executive budget proposal includes \$1 billion in operating aid for Non-MTA Public Transit Systems.

Governor Hochul also recently announced expanded Newburgh-Beacon Bridge Shuttle Bus service to provide more connections for Orange County commuters with MTA Metro-North Railroad trains.

NYSDOT also continues to support passenger rail service in New York State and was glad that Amtrak heeded the Governor's and NYSDOT's calls and agreed to restore - ahead of schedule – all the state-supported service that was disrupted because of the East River Tunnel project.

We are also fully engaged in a study to improve transit options west of the Hudson River in the Hudson Valley and look forward to delivering enhanced services for commuters in this rapidly growing part of the state.

Airports were also a priority in 2025 as we continued to advance projects under the Governor's \$230 million Upstate Airport Economic Development and Revitalization Competition. In the past year, airport modernization projects were completed in Rochester, Ogdensburg, Syracuse, Sullivan County, Binghamton and Saratoga County.

Of course, all this work took place as NYSDOT continued its day-to-day battle with the powers of mother nature. When the weather is at its worst, our incredible team of professionals works 24-7 to protect New Yorkers. This was on full display two weekends ago, when our crews worked around the clock to clear roadways during the severe winter storm Fern that dumped more than a foot of snow or more in most every part of the state.

NYSDOT's 8,400+ dedicated employees – snowplow drivers, mechanics, environmental specialists, drill rig operators, engineers, motor carrier and rail inspectors – to name but a few – are our most valuable asset. As part of our Planning Forward initiative, we are investing in our people and our organization to accomplish our mission.

Keeping our workers safe is always my prime directive. So, I urge the Legislature to consider additional measures to help keep them safe.

Our highway and bridge crews and contractors do difficult work in hazardous conditions that are often made worse by the actions of inattentive, reckless and even abusive drivers.

Last year, we recorded 279 incidents of vehicles or pedestrians wrongly intruding into DOT work zones, putting both themselves and our workers in danger.

Last June, three NYSDOT bridge maintenance workers were injured after an impaired driver crashed into their work zone in Steuben County, striking each of them. Miraculously, all three survived.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Robert Bornt, a beloved member of our Capital Region team who was fatally struck by a car while conducting a flagging operation last May. We continue to mourn Robert's loss and work to support his coworkers, family and friends.

To help prevent this from happening again, we urge that the Legislature consider the following steps proposed by Governor Hochul in this year's budget:

First, expand the Automated Work Zone Speed Monitoring Pilot Program.

Approved by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Hochul in 2021, the Automated Monitoring Pilot Program authorizes the deployment of speed enforcement cameras at a limited number of work zones operated by NYSDOT and the Thruway Authority.

I can tell you the program is working - reducing instances of motorists speeding and driving recklessly through our work zones. Data from 2025 shows a 30 percent reduction in speeding violations that exceeded 11 mph over the limit, compared to 2023–2024.

Last year, thanks to the support of the Legislature, the program was extended to 2031 and expanded - doubling the amount of camera units that could be deployed and allowing their use on MTA-controlled bridges and tunnels.

But camera deployments are still limited by law to work zones on controlled-access highways.

We urge the Legislature to allow deployments in work zones on additional types of roadways as it would help us safeguard even more of our workers. Much of our work takes place on smaller roadways. Regardless of where they are working, our dedicated public servants deserve protection.

In addition, we urge that highway and bridge maintenance workers be given the same protections from assault and harassment that other public servants have received, including transit operators, in the form of enhanced criminal penalties.

Our team members are essential to everything we do at DOT. By protecting them, you are protecting all New Yorkers, allowing us to achieve our mission. And that mission is yielding historic progress for New York State, which thanks to the continued support of Governor Hochul and you, the legislature, will continue in the coming year.

On behalf of Governor Kathy Hochul, I look forward to working with you in each of your communities as DOT continues to carry out our critical mission and together, we move New York forward.

Thank you.