



The Voice of Long Island's Highway & Infrastructure Professionals

**Marc Herbst, Executive Director
Long Island Contractors' Association, Inc.**

New York State Joint Legislative Hearing on Transportation

Tuesday, February 3, 2025, 9:30 AM

**Hamilton Hearing Room B
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York**

Chair Krueger, Chair Pretlow, Senator Cooney, Assemblyman Magnarelli, and distinguished members of the Joint Legislative Committee:

My name is Marc Herbst, and I serve as Executive Director of the Long Island Contractors' Association (LICA). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Long Island's heavy construction industry.

LICA represents 170 firms — contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, and industry partners — who build and maintain the essential infrastructure that keeps New York moving: highways, bridges, transit systems, utilities, and water infrastructure. Most are multi-generational, family-owned businesses providing union jobs and long-term economic value to our region.

LICA's 2026 State Budget Priorities

LICA's recommendations are practical, data-driven, and aligned with conversations we have had with the Governor's Office and the New York State Department of Transportation. We value our strong partnership with DOT and appreciate Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez's leadership in maintaining the state's transportation network.

Support for Governor Hochul’s \$260 Billion Infrastructure and Economic Development Proposal

LICA strongly supports Governor Kathy Hochul’s proposed **\$260-billion multi-year investment plan**, which continues funding for existing capital infrastructure programs while adding significant resources for housing construction, advanced manufacturing, transportation, energy, and economic development initiatives.

This generational investment strategy recognizes that New York’s long-term competitiveness depends on sustained, predictable capital funding. By maintaining current commitments and expanding support for emerging priorities such as semiconductor manufacturing, renewable energy, and statewide housing goals, the Governor’s proposal positions New York to accelerate job creation while strengthening critical infrastructure networks.

Long Island’s contractors and workforce stand ready to partner with the State to deliver these projects efficiently and safely. We encourage the Legislature to affirm and advance this bold investment plan as part of the enacted budget.

As you evaluate the Executive Budget, we urge you to focus on the following priorities:

1. Strengthen Core Local Transportation Programs and Consolidate Where Funding Is Ineffective

Local road conditions across Long Island continue to decline, yet funding is fragmented across numerous small programs that dilute statewide impact.

One example is the Touring Routes program, which provides funding far too limited to address real pavement or safety needs. Long Island receives only 0.27% of Touring Route funds — with Nassau receiving none, and Suffolk receiving only \$288,000 for Greenport and \$84,000 for Southold, totaling just \$372,000.

These minimal allocations do not meaningfully advance state or local transportation goals. LICA urges the Legislature to consolidate underperforming programs and redirect those dollars to high-impact, scalable programs that deliver visible benefits to taxpayers.

2. Increase Investment in the CHIPs Program and Support NYRIC’s Overall Capital Plan Increase

The CHIPs program remains the most effective tool municipalities have to maintain local roads and bridges. Yet CHIPs has not kept pace with inflation, rising material costs, and the growing deterioration of the roadway network.

LICA fully supports the New York Roadway and Infrastructure Coalition (NYRIC) request for:

- **A \$950 million increase** to the next state transportation capital program, and
- **A meaningful CHIPs funding increase** aligned with inflation and construction market realities.

Without these increases, municipalities will fall further behind — driving up long-term costs and compromising roadway safety.

3. Restore the Suburban Highway Infrastructure Program (SHIPs)

Last year, LICA urged reinstatement of SHIPs funding. We were pleased to see this included in the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus’ “People’s Budget,” and again supported by the Town of Oyster Bay in its advocacy to the Governor.

Reinstating SHIPs would provide a targeted, short-term mechanism to address the worst pavement conditions in the state — disproportionately located in suburban regions like Long Island — while longer-term capital planning proceeds.

4. Advance a Long Island Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

As New York prepares for its next transportation capital program, Long Island must have a stronger voice in how projects are prioritized and how federal dollars are allocated.

Legislation sponsored by Assemblyman Steve Stern and Senator Monica Martinez would elevate the Nassau–Suffolk Transportation Coordinating Committee into a full, independent Long Island MPO. At minimum, we urge the State to commit to a **formal financial and administrative study** of the proposal.

Recent Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) discussions highlight the shortcomings of the current model. Long Island’s infrastructure and safety needs cannot continue to be overshadowed.

5. Address Critical Long Island Safety and Infrastructure Needs

We were pleased to see the **Oakdale Merge** identified as a priority in the Executive Budget, and we trust that the final financial plan will include the resources necessary to advance this long-overdue safety and congestion-relief project. At the same time, there are several other Long Island-specific infrastructure needs that merit focused attention in this year’s budget:

- **Southern State Parkway Highway Safety Corridor**

We support legislation from Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages to designate the

Southern State Parkway as a safety corridor, strengthening enforcement and requiring engineering analysis for one of New York's most dangerous corridors.

- **State Highway Drainage System Assessment**

Long Island has the state's largest closed-drainage network — much of it aging, undocumented, and at risk of failure. We support funding a comprehensive, camera-based assessment to identify vulnerabilities before they result in flooding or roadway collapse.

- **Lawrence Aviation / Port Jefferson Branch Planning**

Executive action is needed to break the impasse preventing transfer of the Lawrence Aviation property — a key site for future Port Jefferson Branch electrification and long-term rail planning. Legislation championed by Assemblywoman Rebecca Kassay and Senator Tony Palumbo passed last session; we urge its inclusion in budget deliberations.

6. Protect Transportation Workers Through Proven Safety Measures

LICA strongly supports DOT's initiatives to protect the workforce, including:

- Making **automated work zone speed enforcement** permanent.
- Advancing legislation to protect transportation workers from assault.

These measures save lives and protect the men and women who build and maintain New York's critical infrastructure.

Conclusion

LICA appreciates the Legislature's continued commitment to transportation investment and safety. We stand ready to partner with you and serve as a resource as you shape the 2026 State Budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.