



NYS County Highway Superintendents Association
136 Everett Road | Albany, NY 12205
518.465.1694 ph | 518.465.1942 fax
info@countyhwys.org | www.countyhwys.org



NYS Association of Town Superintendents of Highways, Inc.
136 Everett Road | Albany, NY 12205
518.694.9313 ph | 518.694.9314 fax
info@nystownhwys.org | www.nystownhwys.org

PRESS RELEASE

For Release: March 7th, 2012

CONTACT: David Hartman, President

NYS County Highway Superintendents Association, Inc.

Phone: (518) 465-1694

OR

Joseph Amico, President

NYS Association of Town Superintendents of Highways, Inc.

Phone: (518) 694-9313

600 Town & County Transportation Professionals Rally at Capitol for Better Roads and Bridges

ALBANY, NY —Six hundred county and town highway superintendents, commissioners and other highway industry professionals traveled to Albany to report to state lawmakers on the conditions of their local systems and make the case for increased capital investment in local roads and bridges.

The New York State County Highway Superintendents Association, Inc. (NYSCHSA) and the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways, Inc. (NYSAOTSOH) contend that the state continues to underfund local road and bridge needs by about \$1.2 billion per year. Funding for the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs) that helps local governments finance the majority of their road and bridge projects is at levels far below what is recommended by the NY State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) as needed to simply maintain current conditions.

“CHIPs has not increased for the past four years,” said Joseph Amico, NYSAOTSOH President and Highway Superintendent for the Town of Gates, Monroe County. “The cost of maintaining the local highway system may seem high, but it will only increase if we delay action. New York State either needs to advance effective solutions now or pay a much higher price later when further decay will require a more complete reconstruction.”

“Additionally, we lose ground every year because of inflation on materials, equipment and machinery costs.” stated David Hartman, NYSCHSA President and Highway Superintendent for Yates County. “Our purchasing power and revenues are strained every time there is an upswing in the price of everything from diesel fuel to rock salt to steel.”

In addition to higher levels of funding for CHIPs, State transportation officials have over the years recommended a separate, \$150 million in multi-year state capital funding to local governments for rehabilitation and replacement of bridges and culverts owned by counties, cities, towns and villages. This state aid to local bridge program has yet to be enacted.

In the meantime, more and more bridges on the local system have been weight limited or closed. These bridge closures significantly disrupt communities and cause people to drive additional miles out of their way; consuming gas, wasting time, adding to congestion and increasing safety

concerns. Because there has been no increase in funding levels for local bridge work in the last two budgets, an additional 1,300 local bridges will become deficient over the next several years.

To address today's critical condition of the local transportation infrastructure, the associations are urging the Legislature and the Governor to include, as part of the final 2012-13 State Budget, the following program enhancements:

- ✓ A CHIPs funding increase of the same magnitude as that proposed in the Executive Budget for the statewide highway and bridge transportation system—52%. CHIPs funding therefore should be at \$550 million and the Marchiselli program, which provides state matching funds for some federally funded projects, to \$60 million. Local governments are responsible for 87% of the roads in the state so these funding levels are critical to begin to reverse the deterioration of local roads.
- ✓ Establish a state aid to local bridge and culvert program totaling \$150 million for five years and fund the first year at \$30 million. Localities are responsible for over half of all highway bridges in the State, and a disproportionate number of those are or will soon become deficient due to lack of funding.
- ✓ Reform the Dedicated Highway and Bridge Trust Fund (DHBTF) to ensure that the bulk of dedicated transportation revenues is actually invested in capital projects that ensure the safety of the traveling public. According to the State Comptroller, this year only 24.8 percent of the fund's money will go directly toward the repair and improvement of the State's deteriorating roads and bridges in the state, while 40.2 percent will pay debt service and 35 percent will pay for State Operations.
- ✓ Immediately begin to identify the new State revenues that will fully fund a multi-year transportation plan. The Executive Budget funds only one year of capital transportation spending.
- ✓ Ensure the continued availability of CHIPs funds for preventative maintenance-type projects, such as pavement sealing processes and resurfacing work, as these treatments are vital to extending the functional life of roads. This language is included in the Executive Budget and should be supported.

The groups' local road and bridge campaign is called, "Local Roads Matter!" Local roads are a crucial part of the State's infrastructure. Motorists use local roads and bridges for as much as half of all their travel in New York State. Providing the much-needed additional funds for local roads and bridges also sustains local jobs – both public and private in highway related industries and professions.

Most New York families live on local roads. Manufacturing plants, office buildings and warehouses are located on local roads. Schools, hospitals, police stations and fire stations are on local roads. Farmers depend on local roads to get their goods to market. New York's economic and social life moves over local roads as much as State roads and interstate highways. Every road and bridge in New York contributes to quality of life, whether owned by the State, a county, or any local government.