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Coalition of Labor Leaders, Contractors, Advocates and Long Island Elected Leaders Urge State Lawmakers to Invest in Road & Bridge Repairs

Leaders calls on Gov. Hochul, State Senate and Assembly to Spend Smartly on State Transportation Capital Program

Dix Hills, NY (March 18, 2022)— Leaders from Long Island labor and construction joined advocates and elected leaders calling on Gov. Kathy Hochul and Albany lawmakers to match the unprecedented, bipartisan federal investment in local infrastructure to help finally bring our crumbling roads and bridges into a state of good repair and maintain.



New York State's pavement has steadily deteriorated over the past two decades. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) reports 33% of pavement on Long Island are now rated "fair or poor."

These poor roads conditions directly affect New Yorkers:

- The average annual extra cost of car repair and lost productivity on Long Island is **\$3,192** annually according to the TRIP report released in January 2022.
- Statewide the total cost is **\$28 Billion** annually.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, allocated an additional \$4.6 billion for NYSDOT capital needs over the next five years. That's a 52% increase in funding and an important first step in getting Long Island's crumbling roads and bridges back to good repair, but there's more that needs to be done at the state capital.

Governor Hochul did make infrastructure a priority in her preliminary budget. She proposed a new \$32.8 billion, five-year NYSDOT Capital Plan with a goal of improving the State's roads, bridges, airports, rail facilities, ports, and other transit systems. That said, the proposed NYSDOT Capital Plan, average annual spending on NYSDOT system—the maintenance and construction on the statewide network of roads and bridges maintained directly by NYSDOT—is **lower** than was funded in this year's pre- infrastructure bill budget and is lower over the course of the entire five-year plan than the current year's funding level extrapolated out to five years.

This week the state senate and state assembly released their own fiscal plans. While both call for an increase in funding for the NYSDOT Capital Projects, the state senate's "one house bill," notably, **will add \$2 billion in NYSDOT** bonding authority to support bringing more roads to a state of good repair within the 5-year capital plan.

Rebuild New York Now and more than twenty partners in construction and labor across New York state [sent a letter](#) to the Governor, Senate Majority Leader and Assembly Speaker this week stating, in part: "We strongly support the Senate Majority's proposal, as we believe it seizes the generational opportunity presented by the federal infrastructure bill to move our roads and bridges to a state of good repair, put New Yorkers to work and spur economic recovery."

"The people living on Long Island really need their roads to be repaired and Albany finally has a chance to deliver. The contractors I work with and represent on Long Island stand at the ready to work and repair our failing infrastructure, but we need our leaders at the State Capitol to green light this important investment," said **Marc Herbst, Executive Director of the Long Island Contractors' Association**. "The Governor and state lawmakers finally have a chance to bring real economic development back to New York State. This is not just about jobs, but it's also about making roads safer and doing what's right for all New Yorkers."

"It's no secret that Long Island roads are crumbling; there is an immediate need for them to be repaired or replaced. The Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, championed by Senators Schumer and Gillibrand, Representatives Rice, Suozzi, Garbarino and our Congressional Delegation of New York, provides an unprecedented and significant step toward reversing the rapid decline in condition of Long Island's roads and bridges. This bill is a great start, but more needs to be done to grow the NYSDOT capital program. New York has a historic reputation of leading innovation and growth; this is a tremendous opportunity for New Yorkers

to blaze a path forward rather than watch our infrastructure further deteriorate. Investing in this program will make local infrastructure safer, save New Yorkers money and foster economic growth through the creation of jobs on Long Island and throughout New York State,” said **Billy Haugland Jr., Co-President of Haugland Group and advocate of Rebuild New York Now.**

“You don't have to persuade me to vote for this budget because I already voted for this record budget this is going to give us money in Long Island for our infrastructure, for our roads, for our CHIPS funding, said **State Senator Jim Gaughran (D-Northport).** “We need our roads, we need our fair share, and I'll do what I can to continue to fight to make sure we adopt a budget that takes care of Long Island and takes care of our infrastructure.”

State Senator Anna M. Kaplan (D-Great Neck) said “Infrastructure spending is where the rubber meets the road in the State budget, and I've fought hard to make sure that we're investing what's needed to finally fix our roads, rails and bridges across Long Island. As budget negotiations reach the final hours, I'm grateful for the advocacy of Rebuild New York Now and the Long Island Contractors Association to make sure everyone knows just how important it is that we make these vital investments.”

“I thank LICA and Rebuild NY NOW for standing up for our motorists and our workers to ensure that we rebuild – not simply patch – Long Island's unacceptable and unsafe roads. All of us travel on the same roads as our residents and we know they deserve better. That is why we will all continue to fight to ensure that Long Island receives its fair share of state infrastructure funding. Our hardworking men and women of labor are ready, our drivers are waiting and we stand united in calling on Albany to deliver the funds,” said **State Senator Mario R. Mattera (R-Suffolk).**

Assemblyman Steve Stern (D-Dix Hills) said: "This is a tremendous opportunity that we all have at the state level and at all levels of government. The money is there, how often do we say that?, This year, in particular, it is there. This budget is really all about our priorities, and everybody here feels the same way, that we all share the safety of our roadways as a very top priority for all of us on Long Island. The need is tremendous, and it is urgent. We have the fine men and women from labor ready to get to work. We need to put the budget in place and bring home the funding and make sure that Long Island gets their fair share. The program today is Rebuild NY Now, the Governor will hear from us next week, very loudly and clearly that our priority is to Rebuild Long Island right now!"

State Senator Anthony Palumbo (R-New Suffolk) said: "I grew up on Long Island, am raising my family here and cannot think of a time when our roads were in a worse condition. The deplorable state of our infrastructure is costing Long Islanders thousands of dollars in car repairs and have made our commutes less safe. The time to fix our roads is now. We have the state and federal funding available, and the legislature must prioritize this money to invest in our roads, bridges and infrastructure."

“It is essential that New York State provide ample funding for local transportation infrastructure projects to maintain, repair, and improve safety for our roadways. I stand with Rebuild New York Now, Long Island Contractors' Association, New York State County Highway Superintendents Association, New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways, Inc., our local municipalities, organized labor, and construction industry leaders' call to invest in our Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program ("CHIPS"), as well as make smart infrastructure investments in our roads and bridges,” said **Assemblywoman Judy Griffin (D-Rockville Center)** “My constituents frequently call about their vehicles experiencing damage from potholes, as well as safety issues on our highways. Making a substantial investment is an excellent opportunity to support quality jobs for hardworking New Yorkers, which revitalizes our economy while improving street safety for Long Island drivers. As a member of the Assembly Majority, I

will continue to advocate to increase the share of funding in the New York State Department of Transportation capital program in the 2022-23 State Budget.”

"Proper funding to maintain and improve Long Island's transportation network should never be a debatable issue. These transportation arteries are a critical component of our economy and well being for all of New York and should be a priority in every state budget. I join Rebuild New York Now and the Long Island Contractors Association, as well as millions of residents and motorists, in continuing the call for the fair and necessary appropriation of our tax dollars for infrastructure improvement," **said Assemblyman Joseph DeStefano (R-Medford)**

"I have shovel ready projects in my district in need of this infrastructure funding, from repaving Northern Blvd, repairing bridges in Great Neck and Manhasset recently highlighted in Newsday to be in poor condition, to sewer conversion in the Manhasset business district. That's why we need to get this critical funding to programs like Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs), Bridge NY, and Pave NY, helping to ensure our families can rely on Long Island's roads and bridges to get them where they need to go safely," said **Assemblywoman Gina L. Sillitti (D-Port Washington)**.

Today's press conference was also attended by **Senators Phil Boyle, Alexis Weik, Assemblymembers Edward Ra, Doug Smith, John Mikulin, and Michael Durso**.

A recent survey from AAA found that last year, nationally, 1 in 10 drivers sustained vehicle damage significant enough to warrant a repair after hitting a pothole. With an average price tag of almost \$600 per repair, damage caused by potholes cost drivers a staggering \$26.5 billion in 2021 alone.

"As the state is about to receive an influx of funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, AAA urges state elected officials boost New York State DOT Capital Funding for highway pavement and road improvements. Refilling potholes is only a temporary quick fix," said **John Corlett, Legislative Committee Chairman for AAA New York State**. "When a vehicle hits a pothole with any kind of force, the tires, wheels, and suspension can sustain expensive damage. Poor pavement is the perfect environment for the formation of potholes and the Long Island region has a lot," said Corlett. According to Corlett, AAA responded to 1.8 million tire-related roadside assistance calls nationwide. In New York State during spring of last year, AAA responded to more than 41,000 roadside assistance calls for flat tires.

"As the engineers that design the infrastructure systems in New York State and throughout the world, we see firsthand how deferred investment in our critical infrastructure is a triple net loss. Insufficient investment in roads and bridges impedes mobility and degrades the user experience, it squanders the prior system investments, and it costs proportionally more to bring them back to good repair," said John Evers, PhD, President & CEO of the American Council of Engineering Companies of New York. "Crashes and traffic issues related to poor road conditions cost New Yorkers billions of dollars each year in medical expenses, lost productivity, insurance and legal expenses. Now is the time to stop this decline and leverage this special opportunity to get ahead of the curve. ACEC New York is proud to stand with Rebuild New York Now and NYRIC in support of investing in roads and bridges in the Long Island region, as well as statewide," said **John Evers, President, ACEC New York**.

About LICA and Rebuild New York Now:

Long Island Contractors' Association represents Long Island's premier heavy construction general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and industry supporters. Focused primarily in the infrastructure construction industry, such as highways, bridges, sewers, parks, other public works and private site development, LICA's

member companies play a significant role in sustaining the region's quality of life and economic engine that is Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

Rebuild New York Now is a broad-based coalition comprising members of the construction industry, organized labor and business enterprises, representing more than 30,000 workers and their families with the common goal of investing in infrastructure to ensure the safety and economic health of New York State.

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