



NEW YORK STATE CONFERENCE
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS

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Testimony for the Transportation Joint Budget Hearing Feb 15, 2022

Thank you to Chairs Krueger and Weinstein and all the Members of the Legislature for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the Executive Budget proposal relating to transportation. The New York State Conference of Operating Engineers is a statewide organization representing 30,000 members and 12 local unions. We are the men and women that build New York's roads and bridges. We operate the cranes and heavy equipment that build infrastructure across the state. We have surveyors, crane operators, heavy equipment operators and stationary engineers to name a few.

Our members depend on a robust transportation budget to ensure that there are construction projects in all parts of the state. Whether the projects are roads and bridges or mass transit, our members depend on the state to invest in transportation infrastructure which to us is an investment in good jobs. We are happy to see in the Governor's proposal a fully funded 5-year capital plan. This will ensure many construction jobs. However, with the Federal money coming to the state, we should be maximizing our federal contribution and investing state money to fully maximize the projects so that we can really improve New York State's roads and bridge conditions. The Infrastructure and Jobs Act has a record increase in funds dedicated to NY's roads and bridges. \$4.6 Billion dollars for NYS roads and bridges is a 56% increase in federal infrastructure funds over the next 5 years. However, the NYS Capital plan appears to only fund half of that amount. That is, the Capital Plan only funds roughly \$2 billion. We would like to increase the amount that NYS puts into the final Capital Plan in order to fully maximize our federal funds and improve the conditions of our roads and bridges, at least so they can be rated as "good" rather than "fair."

Part B of the Governor's Budget proposal increases the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) competitive bid threshold. The Executive budget proposal to increase the threshold to \$750,000 would reduce transparency and allow municipalities to skirt vital labor and wage standards. The threshold must remain at its current level. Also, it was just last year that the threshold was raised \$100,000 from the year before. It was thought that \$750,000 was too large an increase. We oppose this proposal. Part G includes a similar change to the bidding at the Thruway Authority which we also strongly oppose.

Lastly, Part AA in the Executive Budget Proposal extends design build while adding some PLA language. We are in favor of allowing the alternative bidding requirements of design build as long as there is a Project Labor Agreement. However, there needs to be a few technical changes to reflect that in the budget language.

Thank you for your consideration of these important transportation issues in the Governor's Budget proposal. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Marina O'Donnell at modonnell@iuoe.org.