



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 15, 2022, 9:30 AM

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony the proposed Executive Budget. My name is Marc Herbst and I serve as the Executive Director of the Long Island Contractors' Association.

The Long Island Contractors' Association (LICA) represents the interests of Long Island's premier heavy construction general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and industry supporters. Our industry is focused primarily on building and maintaining our region's vital infrastructure: its highways, bridges and transit systems as well as utilities, water quality and wastewater systems, and other public works. We carry a sense of pride that many of LICA's 160-member firms are multi-generational, family-owned businesses that are located on Long Island, who continue to work and employ neighbors in our communities. Providing nearly 6,200 direct and more than 16,700 jobs (New York State Department of Labor), our industry contributes \$5.4 billion annually to the region's gross regional product (U.S Bureau of Economic Analysis).

Albany lawmakers will decide how to divvy up the \$24.89 billion for highway, bridge, and transit infrastructure across the state over the next five years. It is essential that we not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Our state has resisted adopting traditional long-term five-year transportation capital programs, blaming the instability of federal dollars emanating from Washington.

During this period, the federal/state funding for roads has shifted from a 50-50 share to roughly today's split of the state covering 60% and the national government providing 40%. That shift has many Albany budgetary bean-counters drooling over the new federal transportation dollars as an opportunity to backfill the recent unbalanced state/federal share splits. Our legislators must prevent this new shell game that threatens to derail our infrastructure funding surplus.

The overall arching question remains; if the federal government sends \$4.6 billion more infrastructure money for the next five years, why does the proposed state spending plan only increase \$2 billion? Where's the rest of the \$2.6 billion? We must use this golden opportunity to invest in our future, lest we fall back into old patterns of ignoring the road ahead of us.

The Long Island community has advocated several projects of regional significance that we strongly ask you to support with advocacy and a financial commitment. These include the reactivation of the New York Route 347 reconstruction project, the rehabilitation and improvement of the Oakdale Merge on New York Route 27, the Meadowbrook Parkway and Southern State Parkway interchange improvements, the capacity expansion of the Sagtikos Parkway, and the extension of third lanes on the Northern State Parkway.

It is time we commit and follow through to a five-year capital spending program, as the Governor has suggested. My fear, otherwise, is that we are doomed to continued suffering from Long Island Expressway potholes, parkway system flooding, Oakdale Merge and Sagtikos Parkway congestion, and other travel nightmares. Last year, we saw the detrimental effects of continued weather erosion climate chaos. We can no longer pretend that these problems will simply vanish.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please let us know if we can provide any additional information.