



May 5, 2026

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
NYS Senate
Legislative Office Building, Room 907
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Carl Heastie
NYS Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Governor Hochul, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Heastie:

On behalf of the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways (NYSAOTSOH), we urge you to support improvements to Tier 6 retirement benefits while minimizing added costs to local taxpayers.

Ask any of New York’s 933 Town Superintendents of Highways about their biggest long-term workforce concern, and the answer is clear: towns are struggling to recruit and retain qualified highway employees. Rising employer retirement system costs, combined with diminished Tier 6 retirement benefits, have made municipal highway careers less competitive. At the same time, New York’s 25,000 municipal highway employees earn only a fraction of the New York State Department of Labor’s local highway prevailing wage rates paid to private highway contractor employees performing similar work.

The combination of reduced pension benefits, increasing retirement system costs, and significantly higher private-sector prevailing wages is making it increasingly difficult for towns to hire and retain the skilled workforce needed to maintain New York’s local roads and bridges.

NYSDOL Prevailing Wage vs. Municipal Highway Employee Wage

Job Description	Brookhaven Highway Employee Hourly Wage (Without Benefits)	Suffolk County Prevailing Wage Hourly + Supplemental Benefits
Concrete Curb Form Setters	\$33.73 - \$35.77	\$63.83 + \$37.18 Per Hour
Construction Equipment Operator	\$43.50	\$79.33 + \$42.65 Per Hour
Heavy Equipment Operator	\$37.35	\$79.33 + \$42.65 Per Hour
Laborer (with CDL)	\$31.68	\$55.60 + \$40.50 Per Hour
Laborer (without CDL)	\$23.52	\$43.75 + \$55.60 Per Hour

New York's local government highway workforce is responsible for the safe operation of 87 percent of the state's public roads, half of its bridges, and not only plowing the local system, but also more than a quarter of NYSDOT roads. This massive local system is owned by 1,600 local governments and includes more than 97,000 centerline miles of roadway and 8,600 highway bridges. During snowstorms, freezing temperatures, flooding, and other severe weather events, local highway crews ensure New Yorkers can safely get to work, school, hospitals, homes, and other essential destinations.

As we have emphasized in prior correspondence, we also respectfully request that the final State Budget include the full \$250 million increase in CHIPS funding. This critical investment would provide immediate, direct relief to local governments responsible for maintaining the vast majority of New York's roadways, helping communities manage rising costs while preserving the safety and condition of essential infrastructure.

Thank you for your continued attention to these important issues and for your partnership with New York's town highway superintendents. We look forward to working together to ensure New York's local transportation system remains safe, reliable, and resilient.

Sincerely,



James A. Dussing

President, NYSAOTSOH

cc: Senator Liz Krueger
Senator Jeremy Cooney
Senator Jessica Ramos
Assemblymember J. Gary Pretlow
Assemblymember William Magnarelli
Assemblymember Harry Bronson
Blake Washington, Division of Budget Director
Chris Friend, Secretary, Senate Finance Committee
Phil Fields, Secretary, Assembly Ways and Means Committee
David Ullman, Deputy Secretary for Transportation