



NEWS RELEASE

New York State Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials
119 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12210 • (518) 463-1185

Peter A. Baynes
Executive Director

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Contact: Peter Baynes
Executive Director
(518) 463-1185

Statement from NYCOM Executive Director Peter Baynes on the 2009-10 Executive Budget

“The New York State Conference of Mayors commends Governor Paterson for going to great lengths to protect the municipal property taxpayer from state tax shifts. Faced with a budgetary deficit of historic proportions, the Governor has shielded most municipalities from painful cuts in AIM funding, the state’s most successful program of local assistance.

“Local governments, however, do not go unscathed under this Executive Budget. New York City – the state’s key economic engine – would lose several hundred million dollars in state assistance at a time when they can least afford it. Also, all local governments would receive a 31% cut in CHIPS highway aid, which will severely limit the economic stimulus effect of planned transportation projects at the local level. As the Senate and Assembly develop their priorities for aid restorations, we urge them to place these two cuts at the top of their lists.

“NYCOM thanks the Governor for recommending a series of mandate relief initiatives that will provide short- and long-term benefit to local governments and their taxpayers. Collateral source reform and a floating interest rate for judgments would save taxpayers real dollars. Creation of a more affordable pension tier for non-uniformed government employees will not harm a single existing worker, yet ensure much-needed cost savings in years to come. We urge the Legislature to enact pension reform immediately and significantly expand the taxpayer savings under this proposal by also including a new pension tier for uniformed employees.

“Mayors, who face these same difficult budget choices every day, appreciate the responsible and balanced approach taken by the Governor in dealing with our state’s financial shortfall. While NYCOM feels the budget is in need of some modifications, we pledge our commitment to working with all of our partners at the state level to achieve a budget that maximizes government efficiency and minimizes municipal property taxes.”