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RMS End of Week Update 3/27/2026



NYS Lawmakers Seek 15% Funding Boost For Upstate Public Transit In NY State Budget

Earlier this week Senate Transportation Chair Jeremy Cooney, Senator Pat Fahy, Assembly Transportation Chair William Magnarelli, The New York Public Transit Association (NYPTA), and public transit agencies from across Upstate New York rallied on the Million Dollar staircase to call for a 15% funding increase for upstate public transit agencies in this year's budget. They were joined by a coalition of legislators from across upstate New York.

“We can’t promote affordability in New York without bolstering public transit,” said Senator Cooney. “Public transit is the great equalizer, breaking down barriers to transportation, education, healthcare, and job opportunities. If we don’t ensure our upstate public transit agencies have the resources they need, we miss an opportunity to promote equity, efficiency, and fairness across our communities. A 15% increase isn’t a luxury, it’s a necessity to keep all New Yorkers connected.”

“Upstate transit authorities are grappling with the same rising cost of gasoline as working families thanks to the ongoing war with Iran and other external factors,” said Senator Patricia Fahy “Here in the Capital Region, CDTA moves more than 50,000 riders every day across our communities, helping people get to work, medical appointments, and

complete other daily tasks. For every dollar we invest in public transit, we generate \$5 in economic return that boosts our small businesses and encourages spending in our communities. Working people in particular rely on public transportation, and during periods of energy crises, we see ridership rates and public transit utilization rise as gasoline prices break the bank. This year, a 15% STOA increase isn't just necessary, it's the lifeline keeping our public transit authorities afloat, and this year's final budget must reflect that reality."

Assembly Transportation Chair Magnarelli said, "Public transit is vital for the economic growth and environmental health of our Upstate communities. For too long, our authorities have been underfunded and reliant on the State's General Fund to fill gaps. To build public transit systems to meet these challenges we need a reliable, predictable source of funding. In Central NY, CENTRO needs these funds to expand in order to meet the service demands the Micron project will bring to the region. As Chair of the Assembly Transportation Committee, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate and Assembly to secure these resources in the final State Budget."

"The best way to address affordability and ensure our customers continue to have access to transportation that is safe, reliable, convenient, and sustainable, is to secure at least a 15% increase in State Operating Assistance in the final state budget," said RGRTA CEO and NYPTA President Miguel Velázquez. "While ridership and demand for more service in the Rochester region continues to grow, our structural deficit threatens to undermine access to jobs, education, health care, childcare, and other daily basic needs. Increased investment in public transit this year and into the future will help us maintain service and put us on solid footing so we can expand service and meet the needs of our customers."

"If we want transit that is frequent, reliable, and truly accessible, a 15% increase in State Operating Assistance is essential," said CDTA CEO Frank Annicaro. "CDTA has spent the past several years expanding service and driving innovation, resulting in nearly 20% growth in pre-pandemic ridership. But transit funding in upstate New York has not kept pace. Without this investment, we risk service reductions and fewer mobility options for the riders who depend on us every day. As the Capital Region, especially downtown Albany, continues to grow, that momentum depends on strong public transportation. When transit falls behind, our communities do too. We are thankful that state leaders have long supported CDTA, and now is the moment to build on that commitment."

"Ridership is increasing in every community we serve, and the fastest growing segment is the most vulnerable – those who are elderly or disabled. Services for those individuals are surging more than 10% each year and will continue to increase as our population ages," said Centro Chief Executive Officer Christopher Tuff. "We need additional support so we can deliver workers to new employers. In Central New York, Micron's investment

will need to be matched with adequate transportation services to ensure success and provide workers with access to their site for decades to come.”

The Senate one-house included a 15% increase to State Operating Assistance (STOA) from last year’s enacted funding. This would mean an additional \$75.8 million for upstate public transit systems, for a total of \$1.09 billion. The Assembly one-house included a 7.45% increase, and the Governor’s executive budget a 5.8% increase. Senators Cooney and Fahy explained that the 15% increase is critical to support the operations of transit agencies like RTS in Rochester and CDTA in the Capital Region and to prevent disruptions to service.

[Statistics provided by the American Public Transit Association](#) underscore the impact public transit agencies have on affordability and economic development. According to NYPTA, for every \$1 invested in public transportation, \$5 is generated in economic returns. They also report that an individual can save up to \$13,000 a year on average, roughly \$1,100 a month, by choosing public transportation instead of driving.

With gas prices rising nationwide, in large part due to the ongoing war with Iran, it was recently reported that prices in New York have risen 16% compared to this time last year. Even before these increases, agencies like RTS and CDTA have already reported double digit gains in ridership year over year. The Senators explained that with rising costs, now is the time to fully commit to adequately funding public transit in upstate New York.

To view the full press release please click [here](#).

Budget Update

With the State Budget deadline looming next week lawmakers in both chambers gaveled out Thursday afternoon and went home to their districts with no expectation that such an agreement would materialize by the time they’re scheduled to return to Albany Monday.

“I can assure everyone here we will not have budget bills completed before the April 1 deadline,” state Senate Finance Chair Liz Krueger, said on the floor Thursday. Senator Krueger was debating the first of 10 budget bills lawmakers will have to approve to finalize the state’s spending plan for the next fiscal year, which begins next Wednesday. That bill, the debt service bill, passed both chambers of the state Legislature Thursday. It’s always the first to pass because it lays out the state’s debt payments ahead of the start of the new fiscal year.

With the remainder of the state budget bills not expected by then, lawmakers expect to approve an extender of current spending next Tuesday, March 31. “Normally it would be for a week,” Assembly Ways and Means Chair J. Gary Pretlow said on the floor Thursday. “But the calendar this year is really working against us in this entire budget process.”

Lawmakers don't expect to remain in Albany next week beyond Wednesday, Krueger said, and they don't expect to return to the state Capitol until April 6 at the earliest because of religious holidays, including Passover and Easter.

"I think there's a pretty good chance we could be here at least someday during that week," Krueger said.

But because of how the state budget is negotiated, it's unlikely that lawmakers would return on Monday, April 6, with bills ready for a vote.

The legislature can approve extenders of any length but, last year, Hochul sent funding requests to the state Legislature every few days to keep their feet to the fire amid ongoing negotiations.

Those extenders matched the different deadlines required to meet payroll obligations for different sections of the state's workforce: institutional, emergency and administrative. The state comptroller's office has already compiled the dates for those deadlines that are in the table below.

Payroll Impacted	Payroll Date	Deadline for Budget or Budget Extender Passage
Institution	Thursday, April 02	Tuesday, March 31 by Noon
Emergency	Monday, April 06	Thursday, April 02 by Noon
Administration	Wednesday, April 08	Monday, April 06 by Noon
Institution	Thursday, April 16	Tuesday, April 14 by Noon
Emergency	Monday, April 20	Thursday, April 16 by Noon
Administration	Wednesday, April 22	Monday, April 20 by Noon
Institution	Thursday, April 30	Tuesday, April 28 by Noon
Emergency	Monday, May 04	Thursday, April 30 by Noon
Administration	Wednesday, May 06	Monday, May 04 by Noon
Institution	Thursday, May 14	Tuesday, May 12 by Noon
Emergency	Monday, May 18	Thursday, May 14 by Noon
Administration	Wednesday, May 20	Monday, May 18 by Noon
Institution	Thursday, May 28	Tuesday, May 26 by Noon
Emergency	Monday, June 01	Thursday, May 28 by Noon
Administration	Wednesday, June 03	Monday, June 01 by Noon
Institution	Thursday, June 11	Tuesday, June 09 by Noon
Emergency	Monday, June 15	Thursday, June 11 by Noon
Administration	Wednesday, June 17	Monday, June 15 by Noon
Institution	Thursday, June 25	Tuesday, June 23 by Noon
Emergency	Monday, June 29	Thursday, June 25 by Noon

Hochul, Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie and state Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins will meet regularly to continue negotiations. But the leaders then need to brief their members on those talks. If their members can't be briefed because of religious

observance, leaders won't have anything to bring back to Hochul to continue negotiations. With several issues unresolved, that makes a deal by April 6 difficult.

Capitol Confidential reported that the two stickiest issues at the moment, according to state Senate Deputy Majority Leader Michael Gianaris, are Hochul's proposals to amend the state's emissions mandates under the Climate Act and address auto insurance costs.

"We're focused more on the (Climate Act) and auto insurance stuff, which has significant concerns from our conference members," Gianaris said.

Governor Hochul's proposals aimed at car insurance, seek to crack down on staged accidents that can generate large payouts from insurers. Reducing those payouts, Governor Hochul has said, would lower premiums.

But Democrats in the state Senate, Senator Gianaris said, are worried about a ripple effect. "Some of the solutions that have been advanced might encourage insurance companies to claim fraud on just about every claim because that would allow them to withhold payments from what I gathered from the governor's proposal," Gianaris said. Like past years, it's those policy items that are expected to stall the spending plan. "On the numbers, we could wrap this budget up by next week but the things we're caught up on are policy debates that don't really have, strictly speaking, anything to do with the state budget," Gianaris said.

That being said, lawmakers share the same position as Hochul, Gianaris said, that pushing negotiations beyond the April 1 deadline is a better outcome than forcing a spending plan without compromise.

We will continue to keep you updated as the budget process moves forward.

To view the full article please click [here](#).

Governor Hochul, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Speaker Heastie Introduce Legislation to Protect Vaccine Access for New Yorkers

This week Governor Kathy Hochul, New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie announced the introduction of two bills in the Senate and Assembly to protect access to lifesaving vaccines for New Yorkers amid an unprecedented federal assault on the science-based system for recommending vaccines widely regarded as a cornerstone of successful public health efforts.

The first bill would require that in addition to the vaccines recommended by the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice (ACIP), health insurers also cover vaccines recommended by the Commissioner of Health to the Superintendent of Financial Services, utilizing generally accepted medical standards and taking into

consideration recommendations by nationally or internationally recognized scientific organizations.

A10710/S9599 includes the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians and/or other similar nationally or internationally recognized scientific organizations in the establishment of immunization administration regulations.

The second bill removes references to ACIP in the Public Health Law (relating to school immunization requirements and recommended immunization schedule for newborns), Education Law (relating to the immunizations that physicians and nurse practitioners are authorized to prescribe or order and that pharmacists are authorized to administer), and Social Services Law (relating to Medicaid coverage). The bill would also authorize pharmacists to administer the COVID-19 immunization to children ages two to 18 under State law. Currently, pharmacists are only authorized by State law to administer the vaccine to adults.

A10711/S9598 requires the administration of certain vaccines for children in accordance with regulations issued by the commissioner, utilizing generally accepted medical standards and based on recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and/or other similar nationally or internationally recognized scientific organizations; removes certain requirements for vaccines to be administered under federal guidance.

“Our public health policies should be guided by science, not politics,” Governor Hochul said. “Yet under President Trump and HHS Director Robert F. Kennedy Jr., we’ve watched the federal government empower vaccine skeptics and shred scientific consensus around the safety and efficacy of vaccines. Here in New York, we’re fighting back. I’m proud to partner with Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie on this legislation to protect vaccine access, put experts at the center of our public health policies, and keep New Yorkers healthy.”

State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, “In an era where federal health officials are undermining scientific integrity and sowing skepticism about lifesaving vaccines, New York is making the conscious choice to champion our medical professionals and reaffirm this state's commitment to the evidence-based practices that have safeguarded communities for generations. This joint legislative package builds off our previously passed proposals and embodies a comprehensive and scientifically grounded approach to public health. It reinforces our healthcare system while modernizing our vaccine guidance to ensure it is clear, accessible, and firmly anchored in

expert knowledge. Together, we are not just advocating for public health; we are upholding the principles of science and evidence that have been proven time and again are essential for a healthy society.”

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie said, “Vaccines have helped keep our families healthy, eradicate deadly diseases and protect our most vulnerable populations. While the federal administration disregards decades of scientific research and puts Americans at risk, here in New York, we believe in science. These bills will help ensure New Yorkers continue to have access to lifesaving immunizations.”

To view the full press release please click [here](#).

Governor Hochul Releases Statement on Jury Decision On Meta And YouTube

In response to this week’s jury decision that found Meta and YouTube liable for creating products that led to harmful and addictive behavior by minors, Governor Hochul released the following statement:

“This landmark verdict is a victory for kids and parents across the nation. I've heard firsthand from our young people about the harms posed by addictive social media algorithms -- and that's why New York led the nation in 2024 by enacting the SAFE for Kids Act, the nation's strongest law restricting these deeply addictive algorithms for minors statewide.”

“We've continued New York's nation-leading commitment to our kids by getting phones out of our schools statewide and passing first-in-the nation safeguards for "AI companions." And earlier this year I announced new plans go even further, with proposals to protect kids from predators, scammers and harmful AI chatbots on online platforms. As the digital age gets more complex day by day, I'll never stop fighting to protect our kids.”

To view the full statement please click [here](#).

NYS COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard

Use this link to view the State’s updated [COVID-19 Hub](#).

NYS COVID-19 Fatalities Tracker

We have included the Fatalities Tracker webpage where updated numbers can be found throughout the week, linked [here](#).

Helpful Links and Resources

[RMS Budget One House Revenue and Tax Table](#)

[RMS Health/Mental Hygiene One House Budget Table](#)

Assembly Yellow Book

Senate Blue Book

FY 27 Senate Finance Economic and Revenue Report

FY27 Assembly Ways & Means Economic and Revenue Report

Empire State Development Tariff Resource Guide

Eliminating Distractions In Schools Resource

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Department of Financial Services information and resources

New York COVID-19 Vaccine Information Page

Department of Health

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

COVID-19 Guidance for Medicaid Providers

Office of Mental Health

<https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/covid-19-resources.html>

OPWDD

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/coronavirus-guidance>

State Education Department

<http://www.op.nysed.gov/COVID-19.html>

NYS Department of Labor

<https://dol.ny.gov/>