

WASHINGTON - Western New York's congressional delegation, Reps. Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Brian Higgins (NY-27) and Kathy Hochul (NY-26) today announced that \$1.2 million has been awarded to the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) to evaluate transportation alternatives in the Amherst-Buffalo Corridor. The funding, awarded through the Federal Transit Administration's Alternatives Analysis program, will be used to identify ways to increase the ease, speed and convenience of commuting in this well-travelled area.

In July, Slaughter, Hochul and Higgins wrote to US Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, in support of the NFTA request for funding. Citing the great strides Western New York has made in sustainable and smart transportation options, the Western New York Representatives asked LaHood to give NFTA's proposal full and careful consideration.

"I'm delighted to announce this new funding for a project that is vital to increasing convenient transportation options for thousands of Western New Yorkers," said Congresswoman Slaughter. "With the significant growth of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus including UB's Medical School moving downtown, along with the growth at UB's North and South Campuses, it is vital that we're ready to accommodate the thousands of commuters and residents who wake up every morning hoping for a quicker, easier daily commute."

"We are continuing to see significant investment and economic development along the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus and throughout our higher educational institutions," said Congressman Higgins. "This will allow us to look at how our transportation infrastructure can better support and link the exciting growth underway."

"Today's announcement is wonderful news for the students and commuters who travel the Amherst-Buffalo Corridor each and every day," said Congresswoman Hochul. "This funding will go a long way in determining how we can relieve congestion and make the trip easier and more convenient for thousands of commuters. On top of the convenience, I am sure that updating our transportation system will help move goods faster and therefore help grow our economy."

Significant developments at the University of Buffalo, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, and private industry are changing the traffic patterns in the Buffalo-Amherst corridor. The Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus will soon have over 12,000 employees commuting to their downtown location, with even more students commuting downtown once the University of Buffalo moves

their medical school to the same downtown campus. The analysis to be completed with today's federal funding will ensure that this economic growth is supported by the best transportation options possible.

The full text of the letter to Secretary LaHood is below.

The Honorable Ray LaHood

Secretary

United States Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE

Washington, D.C. 20590-001

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority's (NFTA) proposal being submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for funding from the Fiscal Year 2011 (FY 11) Alternatives Analysis (AA) Program. NFTA is proposing an analysis of the Amherst-Buffalo Corridor, in partnership with the Greater Buffalo Niagara

Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) and with support from key stakeholders including Erie County, City of Buffalo, Town of Amherst, University at Buffalo (UB) and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC).

Funding will allow NFTA to conduct an evaluation of all reasonable public transit, multimodal alternatives and general alignment options to address transportation needs, problems and opportunities along this corridor. BNMC will soon have over 12,000 employees commuting to their downtown location and will see an influx of new students once UB moves their medical school to the campus. We must support innovative transportation options and this corridor holds the potential to spur economic development around UB's South Campus, in Buffalo's Fruit Belt neighborhood and in Amherst's Eggertsville area.

The Amherst-Buffalo Corridor includes NFTA Metro's highest ridership levels and is a continuation of Buffalo's Main Street Light Rail Rapid Transit system. Significant developments at UB, BNMC, and private investment throughout the corridor have created a wide array of transportation needs and opportunities. A fully developed analysis is needed to ensure that these new economic engines are served by the best transit model possible, now and in the future.

The NFTA and GBNRTC simply cannot fund this study in addition to addressing extensive capital and operational needs. FTA assistance is necessary to complete this important task. A FY 11 AA award will help expand transportation choices, enhance economic competitiveness, and reduce congestion and pollution at a critical time.

The Region is making great strides to incorporate sustainability principles and has been actively developing policies and pursuing strategies that support smart and sustainable growth across all sectors. We are confident that this proposal will greatly improve livability in the Buffalo-Niagara Region and act as a model initiative that could assist transportation providers throughout the nation.

We are pleased to write in support of the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority's proposal and ask that their application be given full and careful consideration. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.