



**Department of  
Transportation**

**ANDREW M. CUOMO**  
Governor

**MATTHEW J. DRISCOLL**  
Commissioner

**Cathy Calhoun**  
Chief of Staff

July 18, 2016

Honorable Brian Higgins  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2459 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Higgins

Thank you for your letter in support of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to examine alternatives for addressing the future of the Buffalo Skyway. As a former mayor, I fully understand and appreciate the criticality of reconnecting communities and enhancing opportunities for economic competitiveness.

The Skyway, as it currently exists, is unequivocally a critical component of Western New York's transportation network, serving commuters, tourists and commerce. Removing the Skyway has long been advanced as a strategy to unleash the economic potential of the waterfront and adjacent property. I also understand that the future of the Skyway needs to be balanced along with the needs of the traveling public, business and industry that currently rely on the structure.

Based on my assessment of the issues, I am please to inform you that the New York State Department of transportation will commence an EIS for the Skyway and surrounding transportation corridors during the current State Transportation Plan period. The EIS will specifically address the mobility, environmental, cultural and economic impacts - as well as necessary mitigation actions - associated with both the removal and replacement of the Skyway. During this evaluation period, however, the existing Skyway will require strategic investments in both maintenance and repair to sustain the structure in a safe and serviceable condition until such time that the alternatives analysis is complete. In the coming months the Department will propose to the members of the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Erie and Niagara Counties, a targeted program of projects to rehabilitate the bridge deck and perform structural steel repairs in the near term.

I look forward to working with you to identify the alternatives and resources necessary to address the long-term future of the Skyway corridor. I want to personally thank you for your longstanding partnership with the Department and dedication to the public you serve. If you have questions regarding the development of the EIS, please contact myself or my Chief of Staff, Cathy Calhoun, at (518) 457-4422.

Sincerely

Mathew J. Driscoll  
Commissioner