



CITY OF ALBANY
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
24 EAGLE STREET
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12207
TELEPHONE (518) 434-5100
WWW.ALBANYNY.ORG

KATHY SHEEHAN
MAYOR

February 5, 2018

HAND DELIVERED

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I am writing regarding the \$12.5 million dollars in aid to the City of Albany that was cut in your Executive Budget Proposal. Respectfully, I ask that you restore this funding in your 30-day budget amendments and make it permanent.

The City of Albany has opened its books in good faith to the State twice. One of my first acts as Mayor in 2014 was to seek a review by the State's Financial Restructuring Board. In 2016, we worked with consultants and the State Budget Office to develop a three-year plan for the City. In both reviews, the need for significant revenue was acknowledged and validated. The budget you signed into law last year also acknowledged this reality by including \$12.5 million in new aid to the City of Albany. We were grateful for your support, and now we need this aid to be made permanent. Cutting this aid would be devastating to public safety and other vital services that Albany residents rely on.

Your State Capital is treated like no other large City in the State. Our AIM funding per capita is a quarter of what Buffalo and Syracuse receive, less than a third of what Rochester receives, about a third of what Niagara Falls receives, and half of what Utica and Troy receive.

Nearly two-thirds of the property in the City is tax exempt, and the overwhelming majority of that property is owned by the State. While we receive a payment from the State under Section 19A of the Public Lands Law, this payment is just 0.36% of the value of the State's property. The resulting burden on our taxpayers is astounding. Residents who own approximately 24% of the value of the property in our City pay nearly 60% of the tax levy. And businesses that make up just 12% of the value pay the other 40%. This crushing tax burden is our number one barrier to economic development.

We have cut millions of dollars from our City budget over the past four years. My 2018 budget included a decrease over the previous year – marking two consecutive years where I have cut the budget over the previous year – all while absorbing increased costs and settling contracts with our unions.

The State employs thousands of workers in the City of Albany. Unfortunately, most of those workers commute into the City from our surrounding, more affluent suburbs. We also host tens of thousands of visitors who come here to conduct business with and lobby State government. The cost of maintaining roads and sidewalks, and of providing public safety services to accommodate and protect these workers and visitors falls to our residents. Providing this level of service while being denied our fair share in aid is not fair, and it is not sustainable.

Governor Cuomo, you didn't create this inequity, but you have the power to fix it. Please don't use municipal aid to the City of Albany as a bargaining chip to the 11th hour as you negotiate the budget. No other City in the state is forced to endure this every year. Our residents, our police officers, our fire fighters and all our hardworking employees deserve better than this from their state government.

Please fight for us. Please stand with us and make Capital City funding permanent. Please restore \$12.5 million in funding to the City of Albany in your 30-day budget amendments. Let's rise together.

Excelsior!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy M. Sheehan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kathy M. Sheehan
Mayor, City of Albany