



MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

S.8473 (Mannion) / A.9894 (Paulin)

AN ACT to amend the highway law and the transportation corporations law, in relation to the department of transportation not requiring surveying in certain situations

The Capital Region Chamber, representing 2,800 businesses and organizations from throughout the Capital Region that employ more than 160,000 area residents, supports S.8473 /A.9894, which would limit the department of transportation's ability to require surveying in certain situations.

Broadband is essential. It has allowed innovators to thrive, students to learn, entrepreneurs to grow our economy and create tremendous job opportunities. This has occurred through limited, reasonable, and sound government regulations. As the bill sponsors point out, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to internet service became a vital tool for individuals to work and connect with others. The expansion of fiber optic and broadband became an even more obvious issue of equity throughout New York State. The Chamber fully supports efforts by New York State, in partnership with Congress, the federal government and the private sector, to bridge the digital divide in a manner that provides maximum coverage, affordable and quality broadband. Unfortunately, the NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) is requiring surveying for multiple steps of fiber optic and broadband deployment, thus delaying this expansion and shift to a more equitable New York State.

This legislation would limit the surveys required by the DOT, allow for a market rate fee to be included in agreements, reduce costs, and encourage a more rapid deployment of fiber optic and broadband.

The Capital Region Chamber recommends the passage of this legislation.

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