

BRIEF

By: Claude Solnik April 2, 2015

State designates \$1 billion for LI projects

Although much of the state's more than \$5 billion from bank settlements are slated to go to Upstate projects, Long Island is slated to obtain roughly-\$1 billion with the help of last-minute additions tucked into other portions of the budget.

The state's budget provides \$150 million from bank settlements to create jobs on Long Island, one tenth of the amount going Upstate.

Another \$400 million was added for "regionally significant projects" downstate, providing more funding for the region.

But hundreds of millions more were spread across the state budget as part of allocations that NYS Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos, R-Rockville Centre, helped obtain for the region, even if they're not specifically designated as economic development.

"We wanted our billion," said John Cameron, chairman of the Long Island Regional Planning Council and managing partner at Cameron Engineering & Associates in Woodbury. "There are other pots. Long Island is getting its billion."

Long Island Association CEO Kevin Law said, even if the region didn't obtain \$1 billion from bank settlements, additional funds "will be used to advance infrastructure projects, leverage private investment and create jobs for our region."

Cameron said Cuomo originally set aside \$100 million for Long Island from bank settlements, although the Assembly increased that to \$150 million.

Skelos helped obtain an additional \$400 million for downstate, which Cameron said is expected to go largely to Long Island.

Out of \$250 million the state Department of Transportation received for a general pool to repair roads and bridges, Cameron said \$62 million was set aside for Long Island. Out of \$1.2 billion for hospitals, \$200 million was set aside specifically for Long Island.

Another \$172 million out of \$750 million for new roads and bridges is slated for Long Island, while \$105 million of \$750 million in additional MTA funding is slated for the region.

"Projects on Long Island are going to compete, as opposed to competing with Upstate," Cameron said. "This is not us competing against another region."