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PRESS RELEASE

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Oneonta Mayor Gary Herzig joined 50 mayors from across New York State in Albany on November 19 to discuss the New York Conference of Mayors priorities for the 2019 Legislative Session. "From infrastructure to tax structure, there are many challenges facing local governments in New York State," said Peter Baynes, executive director of NYCOM. "NYCOM will continue to try to work with state leaders to ensure that all cities and villages receive the attention from the state that they need and deserve."

Following a full day of discussion, mayors from across the state agreed upon several areas in which they look to work in partnership with state legislators and Governor Cuomo to invest in the future of New York's cities and villages.

Priorities for New York State's 2019 budget, as selected by the mayors in attendance, include:

Creation of a Municipal Investment Initiative

A proposed new \$100M Municipal Investment Initiative would provide needs-based funding to be distributed based upon population, poverty level, types of services provided, and the amount of tax exempt property. Communities receiving funding would be required to develop a multi-year plan showing ongoing efforts to encourage economic growth and collaborative work with regional partners.

Increase State Funding for Infrastructure

While the primary role of a local government is to provide vital services to its residents, cities and villages must also maintain critical public infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and water and sewer systems. Future economic development can only be built upon a foundation of a strong infrastructure.

Allow Municipalities to be Compensated for the Cost of Providing Services to Large Tax Exempt Properties

While the tax cap has clearly placed significant pressure on local property tax revenues, another major source of pressure is the increasing amount of tax-exempt property a municipality has within its boundaries. Local governments must be given the ability to recoup at least a portion of the expenses they incur servicing tax exempt properties, particularly since such properties often place the greatest strain on municipal services.

Upon returning from the meeting, Mayor Gary Herzig stated, “The City of Oneonta has demonstrated considerable success in minimizing tax increases without cutting essential services to our residents. Our large number of tax exempt properties, combined with an aging infrastructure, create real challenges for our future economic development and quality of life. I look forward to working with our state legislators on these initiatives.”

Photo: NYCOM President Gary McCarthy, backed by New York State mayors, discusses the mayors' priorities at a news conference in Albany on November 19, 2018.