



Plandome Heights

37 Orchard Street, Manhasset, New York 11030
Tel: (516) 627-1136 Fax: (516) 627 1393
www.plandomeheights-ny.gov

January 31, 2019

Honorable Anna Kaplan
252-254 Mineola Blvd
Mineola, NY 11501

Dear Senator Kaplan:

This letter is to make you aware of my strong opposition to the Governor's proposal in the 2019-20 Executive Budget that would eliminate AIM funding for villages and towns whose AIM amount is less than 2% of their 2017 all funds expenditures. This proposal would eliminate state aid for 91% of New York's smallest local governments and the Village of Plandome Heights is one of them.

To say this proposal makes no sense is an understatement. Of course the ratio of AIM funding to total expenditures is low! That's because for ten years AIM has been held flat while expenditures have continued to rise. It's just simple math. Local governments are being penalized for the very actions the state took that put them in the position they are in today.

If the goal of this legislative session is to enact progressive tax reform, it will not be achieved by cutting local aid and removing municipalities' ability to follow through on their goal to reduce the regressive property tax burden. I urge you to join us in the fight to restore these cuts, preserve the essential municipal services funded by this aid, and protect New Yorkers from state-induced increases in the regressive local property tax.

Ironically, at the same time the Governor is proposing to eliminate state aid for villages and towns, he is asking the State Legislature to make the tax cap permanent. Once again, this combination of actions makes no sense. Local leaders across New York have worked hard to stay under the tax cap, even during the five straight years when the tax cap was well below 2%. Unfortunately, we had to do this with virtually no assistance from the state, as municipal aid remained frozen and mandate relief that was promised when the tax cap was enacted never materialized. There isn't a mayor in New York who doesn't want to reduce property taxes, but losing AIM funding would clearly work against that goal. I am asking that before even considering making the tax cap permanent, you reject the AIM elimination and in its place increase municipal aid for the first time in a decade and enact legislation prohibiting any future unfunded state mandates.

For years we have been asking the State to partner with local governments to help us achieve the many goals we have in common for our communities and for all of New York. The Village of Plandome Heights hopes we can count on you to help make that happen.

Sincerely,

Mayor Kenneth C. Riscica
Village of Plandome Heights

cc: Peter Baynes, NYCOM

Kenneth C. Riscica
Mayor

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Silva Ferman
Gus Panopoulos
Dianne Sheehan
Alvin Solomon
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Mary Breen Corrigan
Prosecutor

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Building Inspector
Stormwater Mgmt.
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