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ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER

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COMPTROLLER CALLS FOR FEDERAL COVID FUNDS TO BE USED FOR TAX REBATE CHECK AND ROAD REPAIRS

Erie County set to receive \$180 million in stimulus funds

(ERIE COUNTY, NY) – Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw is calling on county lawmakers to provide immediate relief for struggling taxpayers by using the latest round of federal stimulus funds to give property tax rebates to the hardworking men and women of Erie County.

Since families and businesses suffered financially because of government mandated Coronavirus closures, Comptroller Mychajliw proposes most of the \$180 million in expected federal stimulus funds earmarked for Erie County government to go right back to taxpayers in the form of a one-time property tax rebate check.

“Forced COVID shutdowns devastated our economy. Small businesses closed. Struggling families suffered. A property tax rebate will put money directly into the pockets of taxpayers and out of the hands of big government. Those funds belong to taxpayers, not politicians. Legislators should reject a \$180 million slush fund for the County Executive to spend like a dictator,” said Comptroller Mychajliw.

The Comptroller recommends breaking down the federal COVID relief aid of \$178,180,000 this way:

- Tax Rebate: \$128,180,000 (72%)
- Infrastructure: \$50,000,000 (28%)

“This is money families can use for housing, car payments, groceries, clothing, or pay down debt. The revenue will be put back into the local economy or families can invest savings,” said Comptroller Mychajliw.

Comptroller Mychajliw points out that each rebate check would be distributed fairly, with the same rebate rate for all, based on a tax rate of \$4.43, as quoted in the 2021 Budget Message and Summary from the Poloncarz Administration. In a letter to Erie County legislators, those rebate checks are broken down this way:

- \$100,000 property assessment, rebate check of \$200
- \$250,000 property assessment, rebate check of \$500

- \$350,000 property assessment, rebate check of \$700
- \$500,000 property assessment, rebate check of \$1,000

In 2020, Erie County received \$160 million in CARES Act funding. Nearly \$6 million of that fund was used for overtime costs of county workers, many of them salaried, managerial confidential employees.

“Salaried, political appointees made more in overtime than hard working families earned in one year. The Health Commissioner getting \$183,000 in overtime pay helped her family. It did nothing for struggling businesses and families that can’t pay their bills. These tax rebates will help thousands of families. The same Legislators that had no problem with millions in overtime for workers cannot turn their backs on taxpayers now,” added Comptroller Mychajliw.

Adding the 2021 federal stimulus funding of \$180 million and the \$160 million in federal revenue given in 2020, Erie County government will have been the recipient of a combined \$340 million in COVID aid.

“Families deserve safe roads to drive on. Erie County’s dilapidated infrastructure is in dire need of repairs. We can provide taxpayers rebate relief and fix crumbling roads and bridges. Warm weather is right around the corner. Construction season is upon us. Let’s fix our roads and support local construction companies,” concluded Comptroller Mychajliw.