



THE LEGISLATURE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

May 15, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We write to you today to request that you issue an executive order extending the implementation term an additional 12 months for libraries with active projects under the New York Library Construction Aid Program. This year alone, nearly 40 libraries with projects totaling more than \$8 million are at risk of not finishing due to the COVID 19 pandemic. These projects are funded on three-year implementation terms; however, due to the delays and closures from COVID-19 these projects are unlikely to be completed within their three-year term. Failure to complete these projects in this timeframe prevents these libraries from spending their full allocation and will require them to reimburse the state for unspent funds.

The New York Library Construction Aid Program runs on a three-year implementation term. For projects that were awarded as part of the FY17-18 budget, their "due date" of June 30, 2020 is looming. Projects started in FY 2018-2019 and FY 2019-2020 face similar issues as they undergo construction delays. To be considered completed, all funds must be encumbered, and all approved project activities must be finished. With the COVID-19 closures, compliance with these completion terms is impossible.

Library systems have stepped up in incredible ways throughout this pandemic. They are expanding their electronic offerings for members and providing virtual programming all while remaining a hub of information for their communities. Libraries should not be penalized for halting construction on projects in compliance with a mandatory statewide shutdown resulting in delays in project completion. An extension would allow the currently active construction projects the flexibility needed to comply with the terms of the Program in these uncertain times.

To support our libraries, we request an extension of twelve additional months from the statutory project end date for current, active projects, to complete all project activities and file a final report with the State Education Department. We urge you to issue an Executive Order that would extend the program implementation term from 36 months (Ed. Law 273a) to 48 months only for currently active projects, not as a permanent amendment to program requirements. This revision would allow the currently active programs the flexibility needed to adjust to our State's current reality.

Thank you for your hard work and leadership during these times. As always, we are grateful and ready to assist you in any way we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rachel May".

Rachel May
Senator, 53rd District

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean M. Ryan".

Sean M. Ryan
Assemblymember, 149th District