



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
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MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE BELLO URGES LEGISLATURE PRESIDENT
LAMAR AND HER REPUBLICAN MAJORITY TO STOP PLAYING
POLITICAL GAMES AND VOTE ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S
ARPA REFERRAL**

LaMar is refusing to hold a vote on the administration's Bring Monroe Back plan, demanding \$40 million in ARPA funds be diverted to fund her personal pet projects

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today urged County Legislature President Sabrina LaMar and her Republican majority to stop playing political games with our community's future and vote tonight on allocating American Rescue Plan Act funds to the previously announced, thoughtful, deliberative investments that will inspire transformative change in our community.

"President LaMar and her Republicans allies are holding community ARPA funds hostage by refusing to vote on this item unless she gets to hand \$40 million to her friends, and to projects and agencies that did not receive money under our transparent, deliberative process," said County Executive Bello. "Providing money to all of these projects would be outside of the procurement process and in violation of federal law, jeopardizing our ability to access all \$144 million in ARPA funding, something President LaMar would have known if she engaged with the administration during this process."

ARPA was signed into law on March 11, 2021 and allocated \$1.9 trillion in federal emergency relief and recovery funds, of which \$350 billion was designated to support state, local, territorial and Tribal governments. Through the efforts of Congressman Joseph D. Morelle, and Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, Monroe County is the recipient of \$144,080,127 in local fiscal recovery funds.

Under County Executive Bello's [Bring Monroe Back recovery initiative](#), the Department of Planning refined a strategic vision for investing the ARPA funding through a communitywide survey, testimony from community organizations and three in-person community forums and one virtual public forum. That open, transparent process ultimately culminated in a public Request for Proposals process that kicked off in June.

The County Legislature was involved every step of the way. They were briefed on the results of community outreach, they were briefed on the timeline and process for project applications and they received answers to every question they asked.

The Department of Planning, in conjunction with an internal review team and voting committee, evaluated the RFP applications from community organizations and vendors and determined the funding awards.

In all, 40 projects were chosen to receive approximately \$98 million of the county's ARPA funds, with remaining funds held back to provide for broadband improvements, ongoing COVID-19 response, a public safety fund and administration. The selected projects were announced September 8 and the ARPA awards referral was submitted for consideration in the October Legislative cycle.

Yet, the ARPA referral was inexplicably held at the discretion of President LaMar for the November cycle, citing a lack of information. During the ensuing 6 weeks, President LaMar and her Republican colleagues provided no feedback and asked no questions. They did not attempt to review the information, including the applications and scoring sheets that were made available to them.

Then, during the October 25 Ways and Means Committee meeting, the legislature referred the ARPA referral back to the Administration, citing a lack of information.

The Bello administration redoubled efforts to provide information to the legislature, through Zoom briefings and by extending regular business hours to legislators could review all applicable materials in person. Just two legislators from the Majority caucus took advantage of those opportunities.

Late last week, President LaMar began circulating a \$40 million list of personal pet projects she wants the county to fund with its ARPA dollars. And, the Clerk of the Legislature began telling people this weekend that the administration's ARPA referral will not be voted on at tonight's meeting.

"Providing money to these projects, outside of the process and in violation of the law, would require cutting money from the critical investments in our community as outlined in the ARPA referral," said County Executive Bello. "Our community is now being held hostage by President LaMar's special interests. I will not stand for this. The County Legislature must stop their games and they must vote to approve the referral tonight."

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