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Comptroller

COUNTY OF ONONDAGA

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NEWS RELEASE

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County Taxpayers Kept in the Dark on Miranda Lambert Concert

Comptroller Says, “New York State Promises to Bailout County for the First Amphitheater Concert”

Syracuse, NY – While the bright stage lights were focused on Miranda Lambert as the inaugural concert at the Lakeview Amphitheater took place, Onondaga County taxpayers were kept in the dark on how the event really functioned. Despite the County Executive stating unequivocally the Amphitheater “won’t put the public dollars as risk”, the Comptroller’s Office has found the concert lost in excess of \$100,000.00.

“What exactly is the Amphitheater supposed to be?” questioned Comptroller Robert E. Antonacci. “One day it is going to generate the funds needed to fix our infrastructure, the next we are told it is a park where we shouldn’t expect a profit”, Antonacci continued. “The taxpayers were told in no uncertain terms their money would not be put at risk. It is just not true. Today we are holding the bag on nearly \$120,000.00 in expenses which were not disclosed when County Executive Mahoney said we made \$2,313.00,” said Antonacci. The Comptroller’s Audit found New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets promised to subsidize \$119,035.88 for the concert. The payment has not been received yet.

Nearly three months after the concert, the County released figures showing a profit. At the time, Mahoney said “[w]e assured residents that we would minimize the risk of the county promoting its own concert in a very short time frame by renting the Lakeview Amphitheater for the first show.”

During the 2016 County budget discussions, this concert was held up as a model for how future concerts will operate.

“Tax dollars were spent on the Amphitheater under certain promises. First and foremost, that it would be an economic engine for the community. For the sake of the taxpayers, I sincerely hope it turns out that way. But right now, the reality is not matching the promise,” said Antonacci.

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“We have asked for more information regarding the concert and how the Amphitheater will operate. Crickets have been the response. At this point in time, without any signed contracts for the numerous concerts already announced, it certainly appears hundreds of thousands of taxpayer-dollars are at risk,” concluded Antonacci.

The audit can be read on the Comptroller’s website, along with other documents, at <http://www.ongov.net/comptroller/AmphitheaterInformation.html>.

Questions regarding the report may be directed to Robert Antonacci II CPA at (315) 435-2130.