



Assemblyman

**Steve Otis**



91st Assembly District

Larchmont - Mamaroneck - New Rochelle - Port Chester - Rye Brook and Rye

May 10, 2023

Dear Friends,

This newsletter brings details regarding passage of the state budget of importance to Westchester. The budget also included in one allocation New York State's share of the important Mamaroneck Sheldrake Army Corps of Engineers flood mitigation project.

I have also included information on upcoming events, a charities symposium sponsored by NYS Attorney General Tish James and The Stem Alliance "STEM-tastic" event at the Hommocks School.

As always, do not hesitate to contact my office if we can be of assistance at 914-939-7028.

Warm regards,

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## **State Budget Includes \$17.5 Million for Village of Mamaroneck Flood Project**

**Albany, NY** – State Senator Shelley B. Mayer (SD 36) and State Assemblyman Steve Otis (AD 91) announced today that the recently adopted state budget includes the \$17.5 million state share to fund the Mamaroneck Sheldrake US Army Corp of Engineers flood project.

In a joint statement, **Senator Mayer and Assemblyman Otis said**, “In the budget, we have included the NYS contribution to the vitally important Mamaroneck ACE project, which will be proceeding to construction. We worked closely with our legislative leaders in each house, Governor Hochul, and Commissioner Basil Seggos of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation on the state contribution that will be pooled with federal and county funds. Mamaroneck needs this project to move to construction.”

The Mamaroneck ACE project is one of the most important flood mitigation projects in Westchester County, given the repeated flood damage suffered by Mamaroneck in numerous storms. The Army Corps has led the studies for this project for decades with NYS participating in cost sharing with the federal government, the village, and the county. The state funding included in the budget will go to the construction work to implement the projects outlined in the study. The Army Corps is now evaluating new hydrology data from Hurricane Ida in order to make any modifications that may be warranted to improve the resiliency of the project.

The federal government, through the Army Corps, is the lead agency on the project, providing 65% of the project cost. United States **Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer**, a major advocate for the project in Washington, said, “As I stood in Mamaroneck after Hurricane Ida, I saw the devastation caused by yet another deadly storm and knew we needed to act. I am proud to say that we have secured the funding needed to protect this community from future flooding.

This project has faced decades of bureaucratic red tape, but thanks to the tireless efforts of local officials and the heroic work of NYS Assemblyman Steve Otis and NYS Senator Shelley Mayer, we have finally weathered the storm. This is a testament to the power of collaboration between federal, state, and local partners, including Westchester County, and the determination of those who fight for their constituents. Together, we have taken a crucial step towards a safer and more resilient future for Mamaroneck and its residents."

**Village of Mamaroneck Mayor Tom Murphy** said, "The State approving their share of the Army Corp project money for Mamaroneck is vital to solving Mamaroneck's existential flooding problems. All of Mamaroneck is grateful to Senator Mayer and Assemblyman Otis for their hard work and steadfast commitment to our residents!"

**Westchester County Executive George Latimer** said, "The allocation of funding towards the Mamaroneck ACE project is not merely an investment in construction, but a crucial investment in the safety and well-being of the residents of Mamaroneck. The incorporation of the NYS contribution in the budget is a momentous stride in advancing this imperative flood mitigation project towards completion. I thank our state delegation for their hard work on this matter, in particular Senator Mayer and Assemblyman Otis who know first-hand just how much the residents of Mamaroneck have suffered."

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Assemblyman Otis at the Sustainable New Rochelle Earth Day Festival with three environmental leaders: Congressman Jamaal Bowman, Raya Salter and Paul Presendieu. Congressman Bowman has made environmental issues a major priority of his work in Congress. Raya Salter is a nationally recognized environmental attorney, a member of the NYS Climate Action Council and founder of the Energy Justice Law Center. Paul Presendieu is Chair of the New Rochelle Ecology and Natural Resources Advisory Committee. *Paul and Steve* sit together on the board of the New York State Association of

Conservation Commissions. The Assemblyman works with all three on environmental issues facing Westchester and New York State. On this beautiful Saturday they were joined by many others celebrating Earth Day in New Rochelle.

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### **State Budget Includes Funding of Importance to Westchester**

Our 2023-24 adopted state budget brings important victories on a wide range of issues of importance to the Sound Shore communities I serve and on statewide issues of significance. One important theme in the budget is to address a variety of affordability issues by controlling costs to property taxpayers, local governments, and school districts, as well as aiding businesses and not-for-profit organizations.

**Education funding** has long been a priority of mine, and this budget completes the full funding of Foundation Aid as part of a plan that includes \$34 billion in total aid to school districts, an increase of \$3 billion. The Foundation Aid total will be \$24 billion providing every district 100% of the funding each was due based upon the aid formula. For many years I organized the effort within the Assembly to advocate for full funding for districts disproportionately underfunded within the school aid distribution this year. The budget also includes \$150 million in new funding for Universal Prekindergarten programs with increased benefit to suburban districts. We also provided additional funding for school meal programs, which educators have highlighted as an important tool in improving learning. These budget allocations help reduce education costs borne by property taxpayers.

I also successfully advocated for increased funding for **SUNY and CUNY to**

**avoid a tuition increase** this year and increased funding for a variety of college tuition financial aid programs. Financial stability for higher education and affordability to students have been a priority every year. I have also worked to win funding increases for special act school districts serving blind and deaf individuals, such as Westchester based New York School for the Deaf.

Another area where I have played a leadership role has been on **environmental issues**. The budget includes \$500 million in new funding for New York's clean water programs, including the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act grant program I helped establish in 2015. I also supported funding for lead pipe replacement and \$400 million towards the state's Environmental Protection Fund.

In addition, I was involved in the efforts to move ahead with important **climate change and clean energy programs**, which were part of the budget discussions. On the issues of all-electric building standards for new construction, expanding our drive to build new renewable energy facilities, improving our electric transmission grid, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and rebate program to control costs to consumers, I have been an active participant in seeking well-crafted solutions. This budget makes great strides forward on all these issues, but our continued attention to make sure the transition to cleaner energy works will require monitoring and adjustment if we are to meet our goals and protect consumers.

In the budget process we also have good news on expanded access for **affordable child-care** and additional resources for mental health services. Our additional **funding for MTA** will lower a planned fare increase and provide financial stability to mass transit weakened by changes in ridership. There will be long-deferred Medicaid rate increases to health care providers and phased-

in increases in the minimum wage starting in January with increases after 2027 to be tied to the inflation rate. We also expanded the Empire State Child Tax Credit, which will now include children under the age of four. This will help keep an additional 900,000 children out of poverty.

The budget also included a variety of **economic development and small business** assistance programs, which I supported in the budget process. These include funds for downtown revitalization, assistance to small business, and support for technology businesses, all building on our success in attracting semiconductor manufacturing to New York and expansion of our film production tax credit program, which has brought projects to our state and the Hudson Valley. We also increased funding for arts organizations.

The budget also included extensive discussion on non-budget issues related to **public safety and housing**. Modifications were made to the rules related to bail. We made provisions for increased funding for a variety of anti-gun violence programs and increased commitment to cybersecurity. We also provided additional funding to protect **reproductive health care** supporting patients and providers. In addition, we enhanced privacy protections for personal health care data, a topic I have worked on as Chair of the Assembly Committee on Science and Technology.

The budget process does not occur in isolation. I was an active participant in the Joint Budget Hearings held in Albany and helped organize the Assembly Westchester Delegation's local forum. Our annual Westchester budget meeting was highly informative, providing our delegation with the details necessary to help us advocate for a variety of issues, including education, social services and transportation. We heard from over 70 speakers representing important organizations and several municipalities across the county.

These are just some of the budget highlights. As with any budget, many of the areas where the Senate, Assembly or the governor supported additional funding or different approaches, budget negotiations result in a compromise. The budget is a very good one for New York. We certainly need to return to discussion of how we can assist in the creation of affordable housing as a partnership with communities and their specific needs, whether they be in New York City, the suburbs, like Westchester and the Hudson Valley, or upstate New York. More information on the 23-24 Enacted Budget can be found on the [Assembly website](#) or the Division of Budget site here: [FY 2023-24 NYS Enacted Budget](#)

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### **Assembly Passes Legislation to Ensure SUNY and CUNY Students Have Access to Medication Abortion**

The Assembly has passed legislation to ensure access to medication abortion to students attending public colleges and universities in New York State ([A.1395-B](#)). This legislation would ensure that all students enrolled in the State University of New York (SUNY) and City University of New York (CUNY) have access to medication abortion on campus by requiring every campus to either employ or contract with authorized prescribers or provide students with information and referrals to local authorized prescribers. Medication abortion provides a safe, noninvasive, effective way to end pregnancy with a less than 1 percent rate of complication and near 100 percent rate of effectiveness.

Protecting reproductive freedoms is critical given the efforts of many states to restrict reproductive healthcare. New York remains committed to keeping abortion accessible for all.



To hear my remarks on the bill on the Assembly floor, click [here](#).

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### **Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program**

The [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) (BIL) established the new Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary program with \$5 billion in appropriated funds over 5 years. The SS4A program funds regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries.

The SS4A program supports Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg's [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) and the Department's goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on our nation's roadways.

The [fiscal year \(FY\) 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) for Safe Streets and Roads for All grants is [live on Grants.gov](#) and open for applications.

The deadline for applications is 5:00 p.m. (EDT) Monday, July 10, 2023. For more information, visit: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A>

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### **Hobart & William Smith Men's Hockey Champs**



In April I helped honor the Hobart College Men's Hockey Team that won the 2022-23 NCAA Division III Men's Hockey Championship. The team was recognized by the Assembly and the Senate and was pictured here with Governor Kathy Hochul in recognition of their championship 29-2 season and winning the NCAA title with an overtime goal in the finals. The team was greeted warmly by all in Albany for bringing a national collegiate title to New York. I enjoyed meeting with the team and celebrating their performance. Many years ago, I played goalie for Hobart Ice Hockey and helped get the team elevated from a club program to NCAA status during my years of collegiate play. I brought out my game jersey from those seasons to mark the occasion of honoring the team in Albany.

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## **Westchester Charities Symposium - Free**

The Office of Attorney General Letitia James Presents:  
Charities Symposium – Doing Well While Doing Good

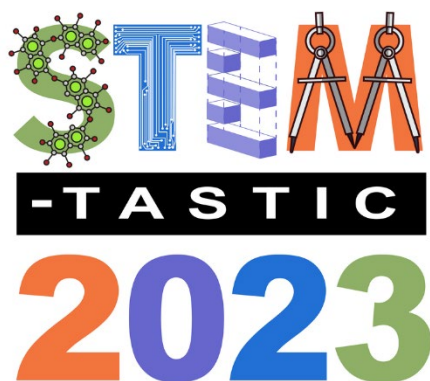
May 17, 2023

1:00 - 4:30 pm

Westchester Community College  
Hanken Academic Arts Building Theatre  
75 Grasslands Rd, Valhalla, NY

**Register:** [Westchester Charities Symposium](#)

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**Friday, May 12th / 6:00pm - 9:00pm**

@ Hommocks Middle School / Larchmont, NY

Free family event.

STEM-tastic is a free festival for over 1,000 people which brings STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering & Math – to life with dozens of hands-on activities.

VOLUNTEER AT STEM-TASTIC:

Register [HERE](#) and get special volunteer perks.

Learn more and get your free tickets [HERE](#).

