



Dear Neighbors,

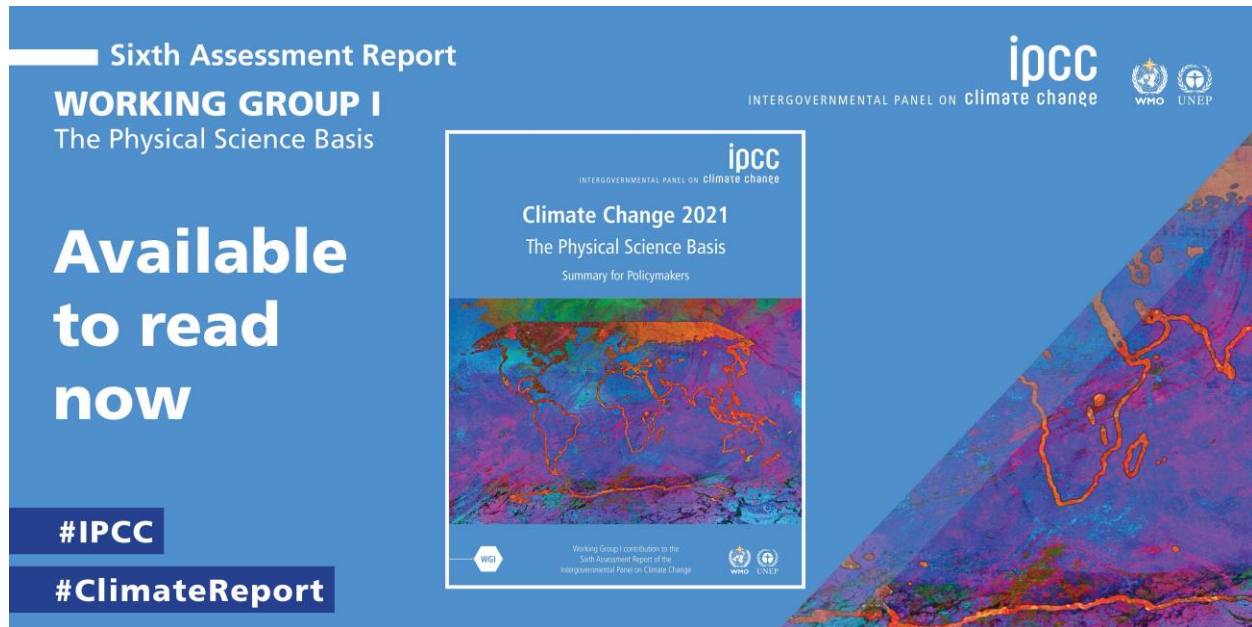
I hope you are staying safe out there as summer winds down and we continue to battle the pandemic. We are seeing a rise in Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations in both Cortland and Tompkins Counties. The [CDC has issued guidance](#) that fully vaccinated individuals in communities with community spread should wear a mask while indoors. Please continue to mask up and social distance while we work to control the spread of the Delta variant. And of course, if you haven't already done so, please consider getting vaccinated.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of the new and returning students arriving in our community. We've done so much work to prepare for a full return to campus and I encourage all of our students to help protect our community by masking, washing your hands, and social distancing to the best of your ability.

The news continues to be incredibly heavy this summer and like many of you the current situation in Afghanistan and the effects of the most recent earthquake and storm in Haiti are weighing heavily on me. This week, my colleagues and I sent a letter to President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken urging the administration to expedite the evacuation of people still on the ground who are at risk and eligible for protection pathways. We also extended our welcome to asylum seekers and refugees from Afghanistan as elected officials from New York State. New York has many organizations doing resettlement work across the state and our community stands ready to support refugees and their families.

Also on my mind is last week's report by the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#), the body of the United Nations responsible for providing scientific information regarding climate

change. The IPCC describes the report as a “code red for Humanity” and cautions that “climate change is already affecting every region of the Earth, in multiple ways.”

The image is a promotional graphic for the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, Working Group I. It features a blue background with a white-bordered inset showing the report's cover. The cover itself has a colorful, abstract map of the world with orange and red lines. Text on the graphic includes: 'Sixth Assessment Report' at the top left; 'WORKING GROUP I The Physical Science Basis' below it; 'Available to read now' in large white letters; '#IPCC' and '#ClimateReport' in dark blue boxes at the bottom left; and the IPCC logo and 'INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON climate change' at the top right. The inset cover also displays the IPCC logo, the title 'Climate Change 2021 The Physical Science Basis Summary for Policymakers', and logos for WHO and UNEP at the bottom.

According to the report, climate change is exacerbating water cycling extremes bringing more intense rainfall and flooding in some regions of the world and intense drought in others. Climate change is increasing sea level rise, which will continue throughout the 21st century, contributing to more frequent and severe coastal flooding in low-lying areas and coastal erosion. Extreme sea level events that previously occurred once in 100 years could happen every year by the end of this century. Our warming climate is also amplifying permafrost thawing, and the loss of seasonal snow cover, melting of glaciers and ice sheets, and loss of summer Arctic sea ice. These frozen waters and lands hold massive amounts of ancient methane and carbon dioxide. As they melt the greenhouse gas (GHG) release is exponentially increasing GHG emissions into the atmosphere.

This report should be viewed as a wake-up call to each and every one of us. We must take immediate action to end our reliance on fossil fuels and reduce our consumption. This summer we all witnessed extreme wildfires, floods, and heat waves across the globe. We are

out of time. The Climate Crisis is here, and we must act swiftly and courageously to save our children from suffering a lifetime in the midst of a cataclysmic climate emergency.



Yesterday, I had the honor of welcoming [Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie](#) to the 125th district as the first stop on his annual statewide tour. On our first stop of the day, we visited our new district office in Cortland, and toured Main Street in Cortland. We were joined by Medical Director Dr. Justine Waldman, and discussed the [REACH Project](#), Inc., a nonprofit that works to get quality health care for individuals that frequently face stigma in healthcare settings. They operate under the principle that individuals should not face judgement or stigmas due to drug use, homelessness or any other issue. Their services include Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), primary care, PrEP, PEP, and HIV treatment, Hepatitis C testing and treatment, counseling services, behavioral health, care management, and social supports and peer programs.



We also visited the [Learning Farm](#) for a tour with cofounder Christa Núñez. The Learning Farm is a truly special place that allows children to connect hands-on with agriculture – how it’s grown, how it can be cultivated for optimal nutrition, and land and crop sustainability – using technology and science to become more than just food consumers. Agriculture is a critical part of New York State’s economy and the state is home to more than 33,000 family farms and nearly 700 farmers markets. Christa Núñez is an African American entrepreneur, researcher, agriculture educator, social justice practitioner and storyteller, and focuses her work on creating cooperative land

governance models and equitable food systems with African diaspora communities. A huge thank you to Speaker Heastie and his team for making the trip to the 125th!

Earlier this week, my team and I were thrilled to spend an inspiring afternoon learning about carbon sequestration strategies with the fabulous scientists in the Soil Health Program in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) at Cornell University.

I am grateful to Dean Ben Houlton and Associate Dean Julie Suarez for inviting us! And a special thank you to Dr. Johannes Lehmann, Dr. Dominic Woolf, Dr. Harold van Es, Dr. Matt Ryan, Joseph Amsilli, Kirsten Kurtz and their teams for sharing their research into biochar, pyrolysis, and soil health!



I'd like to close this week's update by recognizing World Humanitarian Day (August 19). Reviewing the crisis in the Middle East, the Earthquake in Haiti, our climate crisis, and the Covid-19 pandemic, it is imperative that we acknowledge those who are on the front lines of these disasters, helping those who need it most.

In good health,



Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

Assemblymember, 125th A.D.

**ALBANY  
OFFICE**  
LOB 833  
Albany, NY  
12248  
518-455-5444

**CORTLAND  
OFFICE**  
83 Main St  
PO Box 5026  
Cortland, NY  
13045  
607-208-2024

**ITHACA  
OFFICE**  
106 East  
Court  
Street  
Ithaca,  
NY  
14850  
607-277-  
8030

Assembly District 125 | [kellesa@nyassembly.gov](mailto:kellesa@nyassembly.gov)



