



April 17th, 2023

Dear Neighbors,

While the State Budget continues to be negotiated, things haven't slowed down in Albany or the district. There is rarely a dull moment as I continue to fight for the environmental and social issues we so deeply care about, both in person and through my written words. I am eager to report our wins in the finalized budget in the near future and will continue to work hard to ensure that our needs as a district are met.

New Laws

Assembly Speaker Heastie has released a document containing new state laws that took effect at the beginning of the month. These laws address a variety of issues, including the protection of affordable prescription drugs for seniors, a law promoting diversity awareness, emergency petroleum access for heating, and support for veterans in securing home loans. [You can review the complete list of new laws here.](#)

Seneca Meadows Landfill Letter

Solid waste landfills, such as Seneca Meadows Inc. (SMI), are a short-sighted waste management solution with long-term impacts on our health and our environment. In a [letter signed by 40 legislators](#), I urged Governor Hochul not to permit the proposed expansion of the landfill and extension of its closing date from 2025 to 2040. The residents of Seneca Falls and surrounding areas unfairly bear the burden of massive amounts of waste brought up from New York City and other states. The landfill emits enormous amounts of greenhouse gasses, contributes to poorer air quality and litter from the

transportation of garbage, and is a source of PFAS, or “forever chemicals” which leach into the groundwater. This becomes an issue for our district as waste leachate from the landfill can make its way into our municipal water systems. The solution to this beyond closing the SMI landfill at its scheduled date in 2025 is legislation that will curb the unsustainable rate of waste protection and promote a circular economy, as well as my bill [A3296](#) which will bring transparency to PFAS being discharged into our water supplies. You can [watch a video of my statements about Seneca Meadows Inc. Landfill here](#).



Fighting CLCPA Rollback

I spoke out against a dangerous rollback to the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act last week and will continue to protect this hard-won law. My climate conscious colleagues and I have a well thought-through plan to pay for its implementation without shifting the costs onto low and moderate-income New Yorkers. In order to combat the escalation of climate change, we must implement the full strength of the CLCPA, and not cave to the demands of the oil, gas, big agriculture and big lumber industries that would seek to profit from the decline of our planet’s health. [See a video of my remarks here](#).



Invest in Our New York Campaign

I supported advocates from Invest in Our New York (IONY) calling for tax reform that will raise revenue for vital investments into housing and childcare by ensuring that the wealthiest in our state pay their fair share in taxes.



Around the District

NYSEG - A Call for Accountability

Many district residents are struggling with issues related to NYSEG energy utilities. I have heard about your problems with incorrect and inconsistent billing, unduly high meter readings, poor communication and customer service, power outages and shut-offs without warning, and many, many reports of staggering power bills unrelated to significant change in usage.

This is a widespread pattern that demands further attention and investigation, and I am working with other lawmakers and organizations to make sure that this urgent issue stays at the forefront of the Governor's attention. You can [read the letter to the Governor](#) written by Senator Lea Webb and myself, and signed by 30 of our colleagues, urging the denial of rate increases and the continued investigation into NYSEG's administrative management.

Finger Lakes ReUse Celebration

I got the chance this week to celebrate with the great people at [Finger Lakes ReUse](#) and the amazing work they are doing in our community to build a circular economy and to reduce waste being sent to landfills.



Barb Eckstrom's Retirement

I was honored to be able to present Barb Eckstrom an official citation and celebrate her retirement last week in Ithaca. Barb has been an exceptionally dedicated and successful proponent for environmental protections in Tompkins County for 37 years, most recently as the Director of the Department of Recycling and Material Management. Congratulations Barb!



Cornell State Policy Advocacy Clinic

I was honored to serve as a guest lecturer at the State Policy Advocacy Clinic at Cornell and got to dig into some tough policy questions - from immigration to corrections reform to ambulance service in rural areas - with these future leaders.



Visit to SUNY Cortland

I was happy to be able to meet with SUNY Cortland President and Cabinet to discuss student and campus needs, including student mental health issues and staffing shortages in Civil Service positions.



Anna in the News

Earth Month Interview with Spectrum News

I had the opportunity to discuss two important environmental issues in an [interview with Spectrum News](#) for Earth Month -- my bill, the Fashion Sustainability and Social Accountability Act ([A4333](#)), and the control and prevention of Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs).



Public Transportation Op-Ed

Public Transportation is a key factor in social and environmental justice, but is underfunded and deprioritized throughout New York state. Properly funding public transit improvement and expansion will allow for easier, more sustainable commuting, diminish poverty, and diminish Co2 emissions from privately owned vehicles. I wrote a guest [op-ed for lthaca.com](#) promoting the Assembly Budget Proposal to raise taxes for the wealthiest 0.2% of New Yorkers, as well as additional taxes on large corporations to give us the necessary revenue to upgrade and expand access to public transit.

Community Resources

Septic System Replacement Fund

My team and I have had some constituents reach out to us about the New York State Septic System Replacement Fund. Cortland and Tompkins Counties are both participating in this program, which can help to upgrade old or damaged septic systems that meet certain eligibility criteria. Maintenance of septic systems is important to maintaining water quality and preventing harmful algal blooms (HABs).

To determine eligibility and learn more, please reach out to your county's program contact:

Cortland

Michael J. Ryan, P.E

607-753-5035

mryan@cortland-co.org

Tompkins

Douglas Barnes 607-274-6600

dbarnes@tompskins-co.org

You can also visit the [NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation website](#) for more detailed information.

Clean Energy Careers Panel at TC3

From Tompkins Cortland Community College:

New Yorkers for Clean Power is presenting the **Clean Energy Careers Panel** in The Forum (room 169) at Tompkins Cortland Community College at **12:15 p.m. on April 24**. The event is open to all members of the community.

Clean Energy Careers are in HIGH demand across NYS. Learn how YOU can work in Wind, Solar, Geothermal, Transportation, and HVAC! Panelists will discuss their careers and share insight into their respective industries, as well as answer questions about their fields.

Join us to meet with:

- Nick Pryputniewicz, NP Environmental
- Neely Kelley, AES Solar
- Lisa Marshall, New Yorkers for Clean Power
- Sarah Schnabel, LaMorte Electric
- Todd Knobbe, Invenergy Wind and Solar

GED.com Day

The New York State Education Department now requires all GED test takers to create a GED account online. If you would like support or to learn more, please attend one of these GED.com sessions:

Thursday, April 20th 9:30-10:30 am

Community Justice Center

320 W. State St, downtown Ithaca

Monday, April 24th 2:00-3:00 pm

Cornell Appel Commons

186 Cradit Farm Dr, Ithaca NY, 14850

For more information, please contact Luke Sjolund at lsjolund@tstboces.org or at (607) 273-4054.

Lansing High School Prom Closet

The Lansing Community Library will be hosting the [Lansing High School's Prom Closet](#) from April 17th until May 6th.

Dresses, shoes, and purses will be available to try on and take home! Enter through the downstairs entrance, check out the selection, take what you like, and leave without stopping at the desk.

Lansing High School's

PROM *closet*

at the Lansing Library

April 17th

Pop in downstairs,
check out the selection,
take home the

the perfect outfit!



Available until May 6th.

Students from any school district welcome.

Human Rights, Climate Change and Media Coverage

From the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County:

The Tompkins County Office of Human Rights and the Park Center for Independent Media of Ithaca College present a talk by **Mark Hertsgaard**, co-founder and executive director of Covering Climate Now, discussing how competent, comprehensive climate change coverage is related to human rights. [You can tune in on YouTube live](#) on Thursday, April 20th at 5:30 pm.



Comptroller Lost Money Returned

The New York State Comptroller's office is committed to helping New Yorkers access their unclaimed funds, which currently amount to a total of \$17.5 billion. New Yorkers can access an online database administered by the Comptroller's Office. The unclaimed funds consist of a wide range of financial assets, including bank accounts, uncashed checks, and insurance policies that have been dormant for decades. The Comptroller's Office is responsible for safeguarding these funds and making them available to New Yorkers. To claim the funds, individuals must provide proof of their identity and ownership of the funds. The Comptroller's Office will then process the claim and issue a check to the rightful owner. You can use this [online claim system](#) to search for and claim funds.

For more information on OSC's unclaimed funds initiative, [visit OSC's website](#) or contact their office directly at 1-800-221-9311.



I hope you are enjoying the warming weather and are able to spend some time outdoors this week -- I know I plan to!

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