



Dear neighbors and community,

Fall has been so jam packed with community events, educational tours, presentations, and announcements that it can be overwhelming to both write and read all the goings on. I've been working with my team to figure out the most useful rhythm and frequency of my newsletters so thank you for your patience as we experiment. I've heard from many folks that the depth of information for the topics is appreciated, and I want these updates to remain educational as a way to connect us and build community. I'm going to send them more frequently with fewer topics each for accessibility. I hope you all find these topics as exciting and inspiring as we do here in the office!

Around the District

Textile Panel with Assemblymember Jen Lunsford



Earlier last month, I joined [Assemblymember Jen Lunsford](#) for a panel on textile recycling, alongside [Jennifer Lake](#), CEO of [Goodwill of the Finger Lakes](#), and [Dr. Dan Harrison](#), a materials scientist specializing in polymers. The conversation centered on the growing challenges of fast fashion, textile recycling, and the environmental and economic toll this issue has on New York State.

The average American throws away about 81 pounds of clothing each year, yet only a fraction of these textiles are recycled. Most end up in landfills, where intertwined synthetic and natural fibers release harmful microplastics and methane as they decompose. This waste not only strains our environment but also places an enormous burden on the waste management system. We currently have between 15 and 25 years left of landfill space in the entire state. Once landfills are filled New Yorkers will have to pay significantly higher fees to transport waste to landfill sites outside of the state.

During the panel, I spoke about two bills I sponsor that directly target these issues. The first is the Fashion Act ([A.4631](#)), which would require large apparel and footwear companies doing business in New York to map out 50-75% of their supply chains and publicly disclose their environmental impacts, including greenhouse gas emissions, chemical usage, and water impacts. The bill sets enforceable standards for environmental responsibility and imposes penalties for noncompliance. Its goal is to hold fashion brands accountable. If they sell fashion, we want transparency and accountability about their environmental footprint. This bill would bring New York into alignment with the European Union's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) requires large companies to identify, prevent, mitigate, and remedy negative human rights and environmental impacts throughout their value chains. The directive, which entered into force in July 2024, applies to both EU-based and non-EU companies that meet certain size and sales thresholds. Currently New York companies are at a competitive disadvantage with international companies that benefit from the EU law ensuring a level playing field for brands. Our lack of participation means that our companies who want to sell in the EU are being undercut by any domestic brands engaged in the race to the bottom with cheap disposable fast fashion.

The second bill is the Textile Recycling Act ([A.6193](#)), which establishes extended producer responsibility for textiles, a policy approach where producers are legally responsible for the collection, recycling, or safe disposal of the textile products they put on the market, shifting waste management costs and duties from governments and consumers back to the producers. This bill would require producers to submit to the NYS [Department of Environmental Conservation \(DEC\)](#) a plan for organizing textile collection and recycling. It also aims to fund enforcement through a special extended producer responsibility fund while banning the disposal of textiles as regular trash and eventually requiring recycled content in products. By requiring manufactures to create and fund systems for reuse and recycling, the bill aims to reduce landfill waste, support the development of a circular fashion economy, and ensure that the true cost of clothing production is borne by the companies that profit from it. This legislation follows in the footsteps of the Responsible Textile Recovery Act of 2024 (California SB 707), the first Textile EPR bill to pass in the US.

Textile waste is expensive to manage and destructive to our water and air. As local governments scramble to manage growing piles of discarded clothes, valuable ecosystems suffer, and health risks increase. With these two pieces of legislation, we aim to shift responsibility for waste management back to major large-scale corporations and pave the way for a future where clothing isn't a throwaway afterthought but part of a circular economy.

Foodnet Meals on Wheels



Earlier this fall, I was invited to join [Foodnet Meals on Wheels'](#) Community Dining program.

Foodnet plays a vital role in Tompkins County, [providing meals](#) and [nutrition services](#) to older adults. It is the only local agency that delivers hot meals directly to clients' doors, and they go above and beyond by including nutrition support from a registered dietitian. For many home-delivery clients, the Foodnet driver may be the only person they see all day. That means the program provides not only food, but also a safety check, a caring presence, and a connection to the wider community. Foodnet designed the [Community Dining program](#) to combat social isolation among older adults. These meals are more than an opportunity for socialization. They help improve mental and physical health through true community building.

The program welcomes any Tompkins County resident aged 60 or older, as well as their family members or caregivers. There are no financial requirements to participate. At present, Foodnet operates two dining sites: [Titus Towers](#) located at 800 S. Plain St, and [Slaterville Volunteer Fire Company](#) located at 2681 Slaterville Rd. Meal service for both sites is from 11:30am to 1:30pm, and meals are typically served at the events between 12-12:30pm. To ensure everyone has a place at the table, advance registration is required. Interested participants can call 607-266-9553 to register. For those who want to support this essential community resource, Foodnet also welcomes [donations and volunteers](#). Together, we can help ensure that older adults in Tompkins County not only receive the nutrition they need but also the human connection that helps them thrive.

Free Clinic



I had the privilege of visiting the [Ithaca Free Clinic](#), which has been providing free health care since 2006. Operated by the [Ithaca Health Alliance](#), the Clinic is guided by the idea that access to health care should be based on need, not ability to pay. In a time when health disparities are widening across the state and the nation, this model offers a glimpse of what equitable care can and should look like. When individuals have reliable access to care, they are healthier, more productive, and better able to contribute to their families and workplaces. In turn, that strengthens our local workforce, reduces preventable costs, and builds the economic resilience of the entire community.

The Free Clinic provides both [conventional and complementary health services](#), from primary care and physical therapy to acupuncture, counseling, and preventative wellness programs. All services are offered free of charge, made possible through the dedication of volunteer providers and staff, as well as community donations. This grassroots effort has created a vital safety net for individuals and families who might otherwise forgo care due to cost, often with serious consequences for their health and well-being. When people delay or skip treatment because they cannot afford it, preventable conditions worsen, leading to greater personal hardship and higher community costs down the line.

The Ithaca Free Clinic is a model of what community-driven health care can accomplish. By ensuring that everyone, regardless of income, can access essential services, the Clinic not only improves individual health outcomes, but strengthens the resilience and productivity of our entire community. It is important that we continue to support and strengthen providers like this one, because they represent the best of what health care should be, compassionate, equitable, and accessible to all. The Clinic primarily serves individuals without health insurance or whose insurance does not cover the services they need, filling a critical gap in our local health infrastructure. Email clinic@ithacahealth.org or call (607) 330-1254 for an appointment.

Community Resources

Are your NYSEG bills too high?



My office is collecting feedback from residents and businesses in Tompkins and Cortland Counties to better understand how [NYSEG's proposed rate increases](#) will impact you. We want your input, [please take our short survey](#) (10 minutes or less) to share your experiences with billing, outages, and affordability, your input will help guide our advocacy in the [state's ongoing review of NYSEG's rates](#).

- **Monday, November 17, 2025:** Extended deadline for feedback to support rebuttal filings, public hearings, and continued advocacy.

- *[The survey](#) will remain open after this date so that our office can continue gathering local experiences to inform future work on energy affordability and utility oversight.*

My office has signed up to be a formal intervenor in the ongoing NYSEG electric and gas [rate cases](#) before the [New York State Public Service Commission \(PSC\)](#). This will enable the office to bring targeted questions to the utilities and ask for specific data to help my office and I advocate for fair, transparent rates and improved service reliability in our region. We’re collecting feedback from residents and businesses across Tompkins and Cortland Counties to better understand your experiences with NYSEG service, billing, and costs that will help inform her questions to the utilities.

[This short survey](#) (10 minutes or less) asks for the following:

- The affordability of your NYSEG bills and recent rate changes
- Your experiences with power outages and restoration times
- The quality of customer service and billing accuracy
- Educational materials and/or outreach you have received of energy-assistance programs like [HEAP](#) or NYSEG’s discount plan

Your views on NYSEG’s clean-energy and infrastructure investments designed to stabilize the grid and long-term energy affordability.

In good health,



Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

Assemblymember, 125th A.D.

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