

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As your Assemblywoman, I want to give you a quick update on where we are in the state budget process. This time of year is always busy in Albany, as we work to review proposals, negotiate priorities and make important decisions that impact our communities.

My focus throughout this process is on making sure your voice is represented. That means advocating for responsible spending, supporting programs that strengthen our neighborhoods and ensuring taxpayer dollars are used effectively.

While there are still discussions ahead, I remain committed to fighting for a budget that reflects the needs of our district. I'll continue to keep you informed as negotiations move forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

With gratitude,



**Assemblywoman
Andrea Bailey**

Contact Me

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Have a question for Andrea?
Email her at baileya@nyassembly.gov
on this or any other state issue.

Legislative Updates

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

MAJORITY LEADER
Environmental Conservation

COMMITTEES
Local Government
Siting
Transportation
Government Operations
Commission on Solid Waste

Matthew J. Simpson
Assemblyman
114th District

March 16th 2026

Hon. Michelle L. Phillips
Secretary to the Commission
New York State Public Service Commission
Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 3
Albany, NY 12223-1350

CC: Zoryan Hagos, Executive Director
New York State Office of Renewable Energy Siting and Electric Transmission (ORES)

Subject: Request for Disclosure and Documentation Regarding Renewable Energy Siting on Protected Lands

Dear Director and Counsel:

We write to formally request detailed information, documentation, and clarification regarding current and prospective renewable energy projects under review or consideration by the New York State Office of Renewable Energy Siting that may impact protected lands, sensitive environmental areas, or regulated agricultural resources within New York State. Specifically, we are requesting full disclosure of any wind or solar projects that are either currently under review, pending approval, or reasonably anticipated for approval that are:

- Located on, within, or adjacent to wetlands, including but not limited to wetlands in or connected to the Great Lakes basin;
- Situated on designated or protected farmland, including land enrolled in state or federal agricultural preservation programs;
- Located in or near migratory bird corridors, habitats, or other protected wildlife areas, where construction or operation may disrupt species protected under state or federal law;
 - Avoiding direct placement on protected lands but utilizing ancillary infrastructure—including access roads, foundations, substations, transmission lines, or drainage modifications—that may nonetheless disturb or impair wetlands, farmland, or wildlife habitats.

As you are aware, the Office of Renewable Energy Siting possesses extraordinary authority to supersede determinations and recommendations of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, as well as local zoning laws and land-use regulations. That authority demands a corresponding level of transparency, accountability, and adherence to longstanding environmental protections.

Serious concerns have been raised by landowners, municipalities, and environmental advocates across the state regarding ORES approvals that appear to contradict DEC findings, particularly with respect to solar siting on productive farmland and within or near protected wildlife areas. These concerns are not theoretical. They have been documented by individuals from across New York State. Such practices have been observed firsthand in areas including Fort Edward and raise broader statewide implications.

Accordingly, we formally request the following:

- A comprehensive list of all battery energy storage systems, wind, and solar projects under ORES jurisdiction that are located on or near wetlands, grasslands, designated farmland, protected lands, or migratory wildlife areas.
- All criteria, guidance documents, and internal policies used by ORES to evaluate environmental impacts when DEC recommendations are modified, overridden, or deemed non-binding.
- Documentation of any instances in which ORES has approved or is considering approval of projects contrary to DEC environmental assessments or local land-use restrictions.
- An explanation of how ORES defines and evaluates indirect environmental impacts, including those caused by supporting infrastructure that may affect protected lands without being physically located on them.
- A description of oversight mechanisms, if any, that exist to ensure ORES decisions remain consistent with New York State's environmental protection goals and statutory intent.

Let us be clear: The intent of this inquiry is not an opposition to renewable energy, nor is it an indictment of wind or solar development as a concept. New York State must continue to pursue technological innovation and responsible energy diversification. However, it is deeply concerning that an agency tasked with advancing environmental protection goals may be authorizing the degradation of wetlands, destruction of productive farmland, and disruption of protected wildlife habitats in the name of environmental protection.

At best, this represents a troubling contradiction. At worst, it suggests a lack of transparency and accountability that undermines public trust and longstanding environmental safeguards. Environmental protection cannot mean sacrificing the very resources—farmland, wetlands, and ecosystems—that state law and policy were designed to preserve.

This letter is intended to bring clarity, sunlight, and accountability to the scope of authority exercised by the Office of Renewable Energy Siting. I expect a full and substantive response, including all requested documentation, within the timeframes required under applicable law.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,


Matthew J. Simpson
114th Assembly District
Ranker, Environmental Conservation Committee


Paul Bologna
144th Assembly District


Jean K. Bailey
133rd Assembly District


Scott Bendett
107th Assembly District


Alec Brook-Krasny
46th Assembly District


Scott A. Gray
116th Assembly District
Ranker, Energy Committee


Joseph Angelino
121st Assembly District


Anil R. Beephan, Jr.
105th Assembly District


Kenneth D. Blankenbush
117th Assembly District


Eric G. Brown
29th Assembly District

Letter to Department of Public Service:

My colleagues and I sent a letter to the Department of Public Service calling for greater transparency around the permits currently under review by the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES), as well as those planned for the future. Specifically, we are seeking clarity on whether fast-tracked renewable energy projects are being proposed in environmentally sensitive areas.

Our communities deserve a meaningful voice in these decisions. We cannot claim to prioritize environmental responsibility while overlooking local concerns in the name of green energy. Transparency, accountability and respect for the people who live here must remain at the forefront.

Legislative Updates



Honoring Heather Ferrero During Women in History Month

Earlier this month, I had the honor of recognizing Heather Ferrero in Albany during Women in History Month.

As Deputy Planning Director, Heather has been a strong advocate for residents and a champion for protecting Livingston County's farmland and natural resources. I was proud to recognize her leadership and contributions.

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY MINORITY CONFERENCE

Capitol News from Assembly Minority Conference
Assemblyman Ed Ra | Minority Leader, New York State Assembly

LEADER RA ANNOUNCES ASSEMBLY MINORITY JOINT BUDGET CONFERENCE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Assembly Minority Leader Ed Ra (R-Franklin Square) announced the Assembly Minority Conference Joint Budget Conference Committee appointments for fiscal year 2026-2027.

"As the April 1 budget deadline nears, the formation of Joint Budget Conference Committees marks the start of serious negotiations. The fiscal priorities and wish lists have been presented by both the Assembly and Senate Majorities. Their one-house budget plans signaled more of the same troubling tax-and-spend habits that have made our state's economic climate so difficult. This path is unsustainable. Our Conference recognizes the significant financial pressures on New York families, and we believe this year's budget must prioritize fiscal discipline over higher taxes and additional mandates," said Leader Ra.

Below is a list of Joint Budget Conference Committee appointments:

General Conference	Honorable Edward Ra Alternate: Honorable Philip Palmesano	General Government/ Local Assistance	Honorable Brian Manktelow Alternate: Honorable Ari Brown
Education	Honorable Douglas Smith Alternate: Honorable Patrick Chludzinski	Mental Hygiene	Honorable Jodi Giglio Alternate: Honorable Joseph Sempolinski
Health	Honorable Joshua Jensen Alternate: Honorable Jacob Blumencranz	Public Protection/ Criminal Justice/Judiciary	Honorable Michael Reilly Alternate: Honorable Andrea Bailey
Higher Education	Honorable Robert Smullen Alternate: Honorable Samuel Pirozolo	Economic Development	Honorable Matthew Slater Alternate: Honorable Scott Bendett
Human Services	Honorable Michael Novakhov Alternate: Honorable Andrew Molitor	Transportation	Honorable Brian Miller Alternate: Honorable Michael Durso
		Ag/Environmental/Housing	Honorable Christopher Tague Alternate: Honorable John Lemondes

Appointment to serve on the Public Protection/Criminal Justice/Judiciary Joint Budget Conference Committee

I was honored to be appointed to the Public Protection/Criminal Justice/Judiciary Joint Budget Conference Committee during this year's budget process.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to help represent our region and support those serving in public protection roles.



One House Budget

I voted against the Assembly's one-house budget resolution, which outlines the Majority's priorities for the final state budget.

At \$272 billion, this proposal significantly increases spending by \$9.2 billion more than the executive budget and \$18 billion higher than last year. At a time when families are facing an affordability crisis, this level of spending raises serious concerns.

New Yorkers are making tough financial choices every day, and the state government should do the same.

March 2026 Out and About

1.



Pavillion/York Air Rifle and York Girl Volleyball Teams Visit To Albany

1. I had a wonderful time honoring the Pavillion/York Air Rifle and York Girls' Volleyball Teams in Albany! The Pavillion/York Air Rifle Team earned top honors at the New York State Rifle Invitational, capturing the State Championship in the Three-Position Event. The York Middle/High School Girls Varsity Volleyball Team achieved a historic milestone during the 2025 season, capturing its first-ever NYSPHSAA Class D State Championship. I'm proud to recognize all their achievements!



2.

Ag in the classroom

2-4. I had a wonderful time visiting with elementary students from Caledonia-Mumford School, Prattsburgh Central School and Livonia School for Ag in the Classroom. Their curiosity and excitement were a great reminder of how important agricultural education is for our communities.



3.



4.



5.

NYSSMA Meeting

5. I enjoyed meeting with NYSSMA in Albany to hear how local schools are supporting music education.

CHIPS Meeting

6. Our roads and bridges connect our communities, families and businesses. Rising costs make it hard for towns to keep up without more state support. I will keep advocating for fair CHIPS funding to ensure safe, reliable infrastructure for all.



6.

Read Across America Day

7-8. I visited Keshequa and Naples Elementary Schools for Read Across America Day, reading to multiple classrooms and talking with students about the stories. It was a joy to see their curiosity and excitement for reading, and I was proud to support our local schools in promoting literacy.



7.



8.