

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

*From The Suffolk County Legislature's Presiding Officer
William J. Lindsay*

How the Suffolk County Legislature is Handling the Worst Economic Crisis Since the Great Depression

Innovative Revenue Streams

Suffolk County Legislature's Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay is looking at every possible strategy to close the more than \$100 million budget gap facing Suffolk County this year, and one innovative avenue he is exploring, is selling the hundreds of wrecked vehicles stored on county land in Westhampton. He also wants to determine the value of the mountainous piles of old equipment and machinery, including computers, desks, cabinets, and much, much more, that are stored on the Westhampton property.

Lindsay had representatives of a scrap metal company take a cursory look at the vehicles on the property and they said the vehicles could be worth \$500,000 or more if sold as scrap by the county.

"These old vehicles and these piles of old office equipment are never going to be used by anybody for anything, so we might as well sell them for scrap metal, cleaning up the environment and earning revenue the county desperately needs," said Lindsay. "We have to look at every opportunity to raise additional revenue to close the budget gap we are facing, because raising property taxes is not an option."

Tapping the Tax Stabilization Reserve ("Rainy Day") Fund

Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay strongly supported using \$30 million from Suffolk County's "rainy day fund," the Tax Stabilization Reserve Fund, to plug the more than \$100 million hole in the 2009 budget that has resulted from this fiscal crisis.

"It's not raining, it's pouring," said Lindsay, "and the Tax Stabilization Fund was created to use in times exactly like these.

We need to do everything we can—find new revenue sources, gain unions concessions, cut expenses—to close the budget gap that is facing us and tapping the rainy day fund is a critical part of that effort."

There was \$128 million in the Tax Stabilization Fund before the county agreed to remove \$30 million to help offset the budget gap in 2009, so nearly \$100 million still remains in the fund.

Union Concessions

Suffolk County Legislature's Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay praised the Suffolk County unions that have stepped to the plate and made concessions, including lag payrolls, to help the County through the worst economic crisis it has seen since the Great Depression.

"It takes courage and sacrifice for workers to agree to concessions that hurt them financially but help the county weather this fiscal storm," said Lindsay. "Without their willingness to do their part in this crisis, we could not have filled the gaping budget deficit facing us this year."

The unions that have done their part to help the County through this fiscal calamity include the Association of Municipal Employees, County Sheriffs, employees in the District Attorney's office, Parks Police, and the Detective Investigators. Negotiations on possible concessions are underway between the County Executive's office and the Suffolk County Police PBA.

Lindsay also had praise for other county employees, including management and confidential employees, who accepted a lag payroll. "Everyone is doing their part to help us through this economic mess," said Lindsay, "and that is the only way we will manage to steer a course through this crisis."

"If we are to fix this budget problem, everyone will have to pitch in," said Lindsay. "The unions have made concessions, we are keeping an eagle eye on expenses, we are seeking permission from New York State for a variety of revenue-producing innovations that will not raise taxes. Tapping the Tax Stabilization Fund showed the unions the County's good faith in doing its part to close the budget hole."

Suffolk County Legislature Protecting Public Health & Safety

Fighting for Restaurant Inspectors

More than 1 in 5 restaurants and almost one in three school cafeterias in Suffolk County are overdue to be inspected, according to the county Health Department's own records. In light of this fact, the Suffolk County Legislature, led by Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay (D-Holbrook), together with Minority Leader Daniel P. Losquadro (R-Shoreham) and Legislator Kate Browning (WFP-Shirley), convinced County Executive Steve Levy to rescind his plan to cut by almost one-third, the number of already overworked field sanitarians who conduct these inspections.

"We are facing a devastating economic crisis that is forcing difficult decisions about county spending," said Presiding Officer Lindsay. "But now, more than ever, we need to make sure that the County's core services, including protecting public health, are maintained."

In a survey of the County's own Online Restaurant Inspection Database, it was found that 1,013 (22%) of the County's 4,662 permanent food establishments were past due for annual inspections, anywhere from just a

few days delinquent to up to four years past due. Of the 420 educational institutions on the list, 131 (31%) were overdue.

The numbers do not take into account the 3,920 establishments categorized as "high-risk" that require two inspections a year. High-risk status is not identified in the County's online data. The County, by its own admission, is only inspecting 72% of high-risk establishments once a year when they all should be inspected twice a year.

"We must re-focus on ensuring the well being of the restaurant-going public," said Legislator Losquadro, who recently re-filed his bill to establish a restaurant grading system in Suffolk County. Lack of a timely inspection is no reflection on the restaurant; the failure to perform timely inspections is entirely the county's responsibility.

Recognizing that the County does not have enough field sanitarians, the Legislature funded an additional six sanitarians in the 2009 budget. County Executive Levy vetoed the additions and the Legislature overrode his veto. However, the inspectors have not been hired.

In April, the County Executive included five inspectors on a list of potential layoffs. If his plan had gone through, he

would have reduced inspectors by 20%, in a unit that is already short 20-25%.

"We have to do all we can to keep Chef Ramsay from coming to our restaurants," said Legislator Kate Browning, chair of the Legislature's Health Committee, referring to FOX Television's hit show which visited several Suffolk restaurants. "We must make sure that there are no more 'Kitchen Nightmares' in Suffolk County."

The Public Health Protection Bureau is about 90% reimbursed, through state aid and fines and fees collected, so the cost of sanitarians is minimal.

As Suffolk County grapples with the recession, Presiding Officer Lindsay has led the Legislature in taking a vigorously proactive role to reduce the costs of government operations through a variety of innovative savings measures, requiring some difficult and unpopular choices.

But Presiding Officer Lindsay also recognizes that core county services must be maintained, including those that protect the health of county residents. That is why Lindsay added the six new sanitarians in the 2009 operating budget and it is the reason why he will continue to fight to keep the division adequately staffed.

A Healthier You!

Ban on Trans Fats, Calorie Counts Must be on Menus

In an important step toward promoting health and fitness, and to combat obesity, the Suffolk County Legislature recently approved two bills sponsored by Legislator Lou D'Amato (D-North Babylon), directing the County to ban the use of artificial trans fats in food establishments and requiring chain restaurants to prominently post caloric content on their menus.

Suffolk Health Commissioner Dr. Humayun Chaudhry joined other medical professionals, nutritionists, and experts from health-advocacy organizations in support of the proposals. They detailed the grim statistics:

- Unfortunately, Suffolk ranked 13th from the bottom out of 62 counties in New York State in terms of the number of annual heart disease fatalities. – Suffolk Health Commissioner Dr. Chaudhry

- There is no known safe level of trans fats in our diets. – Nancy Rau, RD, Stony Brook University Department of Medicine

- The obesity epidemic is threatening to reverse many of the gains we have made in reducing deaths from heart disease over the past decade. – Julianna Belelieu, American Heart Association

- 14% of cancer deaths among men and 20% of deaths among women can be directly attributed to obesity – Leah Jefferson, American Cancer Society.

While the trans fat ban will be phased in over time, Suffolk residents could start seeing the calorie counts on menus by the end of the year.

Restaurants Must Now Post Prices of Specials

Thanks to legislation sponsored by Legislator Lynne C. Nowick, Suffolk County restaurants are now required to disclose prices of specials offered to patrons. As defined in the law, "daily specials" mean any food item, other than beverages, that is not listed on a restaurant's regular menu and is offered for sale only on certain days. The price of food items shall be set forth on a restaurant's regular printed menu, on a printed daily specials' page and/or posted in a manner and location so the price of food items is readily observable by patrons. According to Legislator Nowick, "Too often a diner will order a special, thinking the price should be more attractive than the regular menu. Many consumers are embarrassed to ask the price and are often shocked when the bill arrives. This is just disclosure to the patron and fair to all."



Testing of Private Fire Hydrants Now Required

The Suffolk County Legislature recently passed a new law, sponsored by Legislator Jack Eddington (WFP-Medford) and Legislator Brian Beedenbender (D-Centereach) and is expected to be in effect by mid-summer, which requires owners of private community water systems to test the operability and water pressure of their hydrants annually. These communities must then file the test results with the town or village fire marshal and local fire departments, as well as file affidavits with the county certifying that inspections were done. The new law closes a gap revealed after a fire at a Selden complex. Prior to the new local law, state law required private communities to test their hydrants annually and make inspection reports available to local authorities upon request. However, state law does not require that reports be filed with any local municipal agency, allowing for a gap in follow-up and the potential for hydrants to be inoperable during emergencies. The new local law will require that all communities with private water systems have their hydrants tested with reports filed and certified by Dec. 31, 2009.

No More Selling Old Tires As New

Suffolk County Legislator Tom Barraga (R-C-I-WF) West Islip recently authored a bill passed by the Legislature which will prohibit retail stores from selling tires that were manufactured more than six years ago. A special investigation by Brian Ross of ABC found examples of tires older than six years being sold at certain Walmart, Goodyear and Sears retail stores. "The purpose is to prohibit the sale of tires for passenger vehicles or light trucks that were manufactured more than six years ago. Tires that old dry out with age and when placed on a vehicle there is a real threat of the tread pulling off the tire resulting in severe injury and in some cases death." - Said Barraga

"If you wish to determine when a tire has been manufactured, look on the inside rim for the numbers. For example, if you see the numbers 3602, that tire was manufactured in the 36th week of 2002. If you see the numbers 479 that tire was manufactured in the 47th week of 1999. Do not purchase a tire that has a date that is six years older. The manufacturers do not make it easy for the customer to identify the production date on a tire so bring a flashlight with you to help find the black numbers on a black tire."-said Barraga

Legislature Improves Road Safety with Red Light Cameras

Suffolk County Legislature's Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay said that the red-light running cameras that were authorized recently by the Legislature will make Suffolk County's dangerous roads safer.

"The roads of Suffolk County are some of the most dangerous in all of New York State and we have an obligation to do anything we can to make them safer," said Presiding Officer Lindsay. "Red-light running cameras will make our roads safer by encouraging drivers to exercise caution at intersections and avoid running lights that are changing. Saving a few seconds by running a yellow light all too often can result in a terrible crash."

Possible locations for the 50 cameras have been studied by the county's Traffic Safety Department. After installation and operation of the lights is put out to bid and a vendor selected, it is expected that actual installation could begin early next year.

Protecting Children, Seniors & Minorities

SUFFOLK FIRST IN NATION TO BAN TOXIC BABY BOTTLES

Legislator Stern's proposal bans the sale of baby bottles and toddler cups containing BPA

The Suffolk County Legislature unanimously approved Legislator Steve Stern's (D-Huntington) groundbreaking legislation to protect babies and toddlers from ingesting the synthetic estrogen Bisphenol-A (BPA), contained in hard plastics used in baby bottles and "sippy" cups designed for young children.

The legislation was supported by medical professionals, public health and environmental advocates. Suffolk County is the first jurisdiction in the nation to ban the sale of infant and toddler drinking items that contain BPA. "Suffolk County has always taken the lead in protecting public health," Legislator Stern said. "We must follow the precautionary principle and be pro-active, especially when the health of our most vulnerable citizens, our babies and young children, is at risk and safe alternatives are available. This legislation will help reduce unnecessary exposure to a substance linked with multiple health risks."

BPA has been linked to endocrine and hormonal abnormalities in babies and young children and is detectable in 93% of the population. Numerous independent scientific studies have shown that leaching of BPA has serious health consequences such as neurobehavioral disorders, including hyperactivity and learning disorders, disorders of the prostate and uterus, links to heart disease, abnormal liver function and diabetes and increased susceptibility to breast and prostate cancer.

"This new law is an important initiative that will re-shape environmental policy and will serve as an example for the entire nation," said Karen Joy Miller, Director of the Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition-Prevention is the Cure. "This measure will help protect future generations."

There are safe alternatives to BPA. Mass market retailers, such as Babies "R" Us, have removed infant and toddler products containing BPA from their shelves



and Canada has also banned the sale of such products. "We have never been afraid of challenging the status quo, particularly when it comes to the priority of ensuring our children's health," Legislator Stern said. "We strongly believe that this new law will have a significant impact in protecting the health of our young children by removing products containing BPA from the store shelves in our community."

Protecting Seniors with the creation of SILVER ALERTS

The Suffolk County Legislature unanimously passed Legislator Steve Stern's (D-Huntington, 16th L.D) legislation creating a "Silver Alert" program in Suffolk County. This program will assist law enforcement in locating seniors and other individuals with cognitive impairments who wander and get lost. Similar to an "Amber Alert", which is declared when a child is abducted, a "Silver Alert" is issued when a person with Alzheimer's or other cognitive disorder is reported missing. The Suffolk County police department will maintain a database and distribute identifying information such as the individuals name, age, physical description, the victim's last known location and identifying vehicle information, if applicable. These alerts will also be posted on highway signs throughout Suffolk County. Eleven states, including Florida, have implemented similar programs and they have proven highly successful in returning seniors and others home safely. In Florida, all 19 persons for whom "Silver Alerts" were issued since November 2008 were successfully found.

"As the population of Suffolk County ages, an increasing number of us will be affected by cognitive disorders such as Alzheimer's," Legislator Stern said. "This program will provide a valuable resource for law enforcement and for our community to aid in the safe return of our loved ones, and provide peace of mind to the families of those caring for the elderly and those persons with special needs."



Legislature Establishes Hate Crimes Task Force

Following the horrific hate-crime killing of Guatemalan Patchogue resident Marcelo Luchero last fall, 15th District County Legislator DuWayne Gregory was successful in earning the swift support of the Suffolk County Legislature for his move to establish a Hate Crimes Task Force in the county.

Legislator Gregory noted the sharp increase in crimes against Latinos, and said that immigrants, especially undocumented workers, are reluctant to report crimes to the police for fear of reprisal. He said the fact that only one verified hate crime was reported in Suffolk County in 2007 makes it clear that hate crimes occurring in Suffolk County are not being reported, therefore making it difficult to be addressed by police.

"We need to find out why these hate crimes are not being reported, and we need to find ways to insure that they are reported," said Legislator Gregory. "We all know that there was far more than one hate crime in 2007. We need to find ways to encourage all residents to report crimes to the police, so that the police can investigate these terrible acts, find those responsible, make arrests and let all Hispanics and all county residents know that hate crimes will not be tolerated in Suffolk County."

The new task force is charged with examining the sources of racial tension in the county, studying and analyzing the mechanisms used to report hate crimes in the county, and providing recommendations on current hate crime legislation and on improving reporting of hate crimes.

The Task Force will hold at least four public hearings throughout the county, to assemble the data and information necessary to complete the evaluation, and get input from all members of the public. The Task Force has six months to finish its report and file it with the County Legislature.

Legislator Gregory himself was the victim of a hate crime as a child, and knows well the reluctance of hate crime victims to speak about attacks. "I never spoke about the hate crime directed at me and I understand the difficulty of reporting hate crimes," said Legislator Gregory. "I am hopeful that the Task Force will discover ways to ease that burden for victims of hate crimes, and help give the police the tools they need to end hate crimes in Suffolk County."

Legislature Improves Child Care Assistance Application Process

The Suffolk County Legislature has passed a resolution insuring that the County Department of Social Services keep an up-to-date child care waiting list and provide application forms on-line to make it easier for applicants to get on the list.

The resolution was introduced by County Legislature Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay and was unanimously approved by the legislature.

The resolution directs the Department of Social Services "to continue to maintain a waiting list of all applicants seeking child care who are eligible to receive a subsidy," and states that "every eligible family and child is ensured a place on the waiting list."

Presiding Officer Lindsay said that the County must do everything in its power to make it easier for families to get on the day care waiting list so they can receive services if and when they become available. The need for day care greatly exceeds the County's ability to provide services and it is hoped that if the County can show New York State the great need for services in Suffolk County, an increase in state funding might be forthcoming.

Legislature Fights Hate Crimes by Passing Marcelo Lucero's Law

The Suffolk County Legislature passed a bill sponsored by Legislators Wayne Horsley (D-Babylon) and DuWayne Gregory (D-Amityville), to strengthen existing Suffolk County Hate Crime's legislation, and fund efforts to increase awareness and understanding among high school students in Suffolk County. Dubbed Marcelo Lucero's Law, it increased the civil penalty imposed against a convicted hate crime perpetrator exponentially, raising the fine collected for first, second and third offense from \$1,000, \$2,000, and \$5,000 to \$5,000, \$10,000, and \$20,000, respectively. All fines collected will be earmarked to fund the Suffolk County Junior Human Rights Commission Day[1]. The law also formally renames the Suffolk County "Anti-Bias" law, "Marcelo Lucero's Law."

"In the past, the nation and the media have taken great interest in policy debates at the Suffolk County Legislature. Let them also take notice that now there is no debate. There is no disagreement over the priceless and irreplaceable value of human life, and the adoption of Marcelo Lucero's Law serves as a symbol of that simple fact," stated Legislator Horsley. "Let us all acknowledge that Marcelo Lucero was unjustly taken from this earth and that is something no law can rectify. But, our passing Marcelo Lucero's Law is a great and symbolic declaration to everyone in our county, our state, and our nation. Suffolk County will not tolerate acts of hate against anyone, for any reason, and we are committed to increasing awareness and understanding throughout our communities."

Legislator Gregory stated, "This law sends the right message that Suffolk County is a place where hate and racism are not tolerated, and those who perpetrate acts of this nature will pay and pay dearly. The hidden impact of racism is an economic one, because men, women and families avoid areas where they fear for their safety which, in turn, has a direct economic impact on Suffolk County. It is only appropriate that we increase the economic penalty for these types of crimes."



According to recent reports many other potential hate crimes are under investigation by the Suffolk County Police Department's Hate Crimes Unit. In fact, the New York Times recently reported that as many as 11 men have stepped forward to recount more than 13 previously unreported acts of racially motivated violence.

Fighting for Our Neighborhoods Protecting Our Environment

Taking Back our Neighborhoods

Legislators Fight to rid communities of slumlords and overcrowded houses

Suffolk County Legislator Kate Browning (D-Shirley) has sponsored, and the Suffolk County Legislature has passed numerous pieces of legislation designed to protect our communities from absentee slumlords and promote home ownership, the centerpiece of building stronger neighborhoods.

Among the pieces of legislation aimed at protecting our communities is a law that requires that the County Department of Social Services (DSS) verify that accommodations used by DSS to house recipients of public assistance have the necessary certificate of occupancy and/or rental permit.

Also, the Legislature passed a law that requires owners of homes auctioned off by Suffolk County to live in the homes for 10 years, insuring that the homes are not purchased by speculators and then become rundown eyesores, but instead are used to provide first-time home buyers with a way to achieve the American dream of home ownership. Previously, county law required that the owner of the property live there for the first five years after purchase from the county.

The new law extends the owner occupancy requirement to ten years, but a key change is that now the covenant runs with the land rather than the original bidder. If someone needs to sell the home because of a job transfer or other extenuating circumstances, the home can be sold and the new owner will have to live in the home.

The county takes properties when owners fail to pay their taxes.

With the current housing crisis and slowing economy, more parcels have entered the county inventory. There also tends to be clusters of parcels in working class communities because they are hit the hardest during these difficult times. The county auction can have a detrimental impact on these areas if speculators aren't regulated.

**We
are fighting
to take back our
neighborhoods and
these programs are
going to revitalize
communities that
need it the most."**

-Leg. Kate Browning

Browning also introduced a law that allows town supervisors and village mayors to submit written notice to the DSS about housing accommodations in violation of building codes, ordinances and regulations. If the dwelling is occupied by public assistance recipients, the violations must be addressed within 20 days. If the violations are not addressed, DSS would work with any willing public assistance recipient at the dwelling to find alternative housing.

Town Supervisors have been asked to provide DSS with a list of the ten most egregious housing violations and DSS inspectors will check to see if any of the listed homes are occupied by DSS clients. After those 10 homes are taken care of, Supervisors will be asked to submit another 10-home list.

"These initiatives are designed to encourage home ownership by eliminating dilapidated homes that have brought down property values and ruined our quality of life for years," said Legislator Browning. "We are fighting to take back our neighborhoods and both these programs are going to revitalize communities that need it the most."

Agricultural Stewardship Program Receives National Honors

Participation Mitigates Farms' Impact on Suffolk's Environment

Deputy Presiding Officer Vivian Vilorio-Fisher (D-Setauket) recently joined farmers, environmentalists and Cornell University's Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County at a press conference announcing that Suffolk County received a 2008 National Association of Counties [NACO] Achievement Award for its Agricultural Stewardship Program. The program is administered by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County and is the product of a 2003 bill sponsored by Vilorio-Fisher calling for the creation of a task force to study and recommend ways to reduce and mitigate pesticide and nitrogen usage on the County's more than 25,000 acres of active farmland.

NACO began giving out Achievement Awards in 1970 in recognition of innovative county government programs. These so-called "County Model Programs" are then promoted by NACO as a part of the Association's New County, USA campaign aimed

at modernizing and streamlining county government. According to NACO, "The Achievement Awards Program gives national recognition to county accomplishments, and has enabled NACO to build a storehouse of county success stories that can be passed on to other counties."

As receiving this honor would suggest, the program was innovative in its ability to bring together people from differing points of view and work through disagreements to come to a solution.

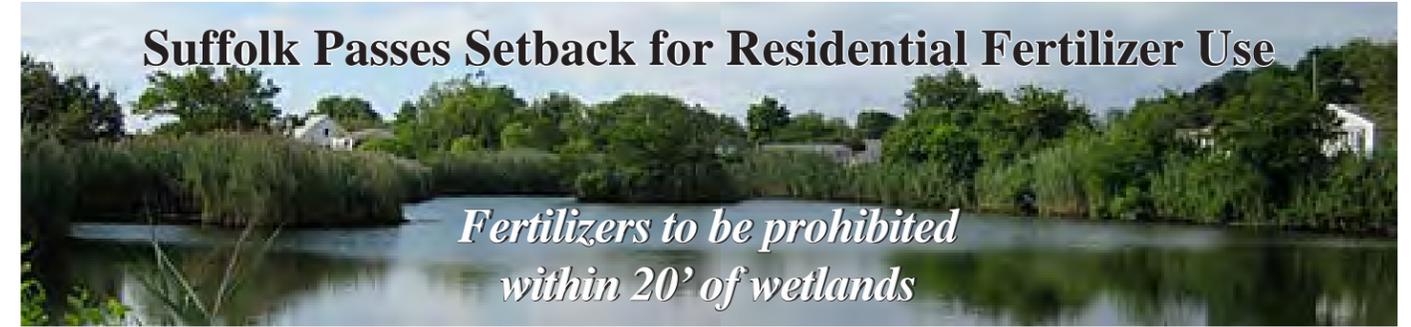
"When we began there was a sense that the interests of the farm industry and environmentalists were irreconcilable," Vilorio-Fisher said. "However, when we all sat down, it became evident that utilizing environmentally friendly farming practices is not a hindrance to farm production or profitability."

After nine meetings of the Suffolk County Agricultural Environmental Management Task Force, established by Resolution

520-2003 which was sponsored by Vilorio-Fisher, the group issued a final report and made recommendations on the development and implementation of a County Agricultural Stewardship Program. The resulting voluntary program, of Best Management Practices, is being utilized by over 200 of Suffolk County's farmers resulting in a significant reduction in agricultural runoff (both nitrogen and pesticide) going into our streams and the sole source aquifer, from which our County's drinking water comes.

Issued with the Task Force's final report, in May of 2004, a cover letter called on Suffolk County to "forge a new and better agricultural paradigm" to achieve meaningful pollution reduction. The recommendations outlined in that report and incorporated in the program developed and administered by Cornell Cooperative Extension have helped to reshape traditional farming in Suffolk County by offering research, education, incentives and assistance in developing plans to reduce runoff.

Suffolk Passes Setback for Residential Fertilizer Use



*Fertilizers to be prohibited
within 20' of wetlands*

The Suffolk County Legislature approved legislation sponsored by Legislator Jay Schneiderman (I) of Sag Harbor prohibiting the residential use of fertilizers within 20 ft. of natural water bodies. The law, which cites the environmental detriments associated with fertilizer run-off, creates a county-wide setback for fertilizer use from wetlands. Fertilizers typically contain nitrogen and phosphorus which can leach into bays and harbors stimulating algae growth. Algal blooms, such as the infamous "brown tide", have been associ-

ated with the decline of shellfish populations throughout the county. "Fertilizers provide nutrients for plants. These same nutrients spur the growth of algae which in turn deplete oxygen from the water and block needed sunlight from bottom plants that provide safe habitat for marine life. This is a step toward restoring the ecological health of our bays," said Legislator Schneiderman whose district includes Long Island's South Fork with many waterfront properties. Violations of the law are subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$1,000 per violation.

"I'm happy to see that the county is putting the health of our marine environment ahead of our desire to see lush green lawns," said Schneiderman. "This continues a long history of Suffolk County showing leadership on environmental policy."

In December of 2007, the Legislature established a prohibition on residential fertilizer application from November 1 and April 1 to protect water quality. In November of 1970 Suffolk County became the first in the nation to prohibit detergents containing phosphates in an effort to protect water quality.

Legislature Bans Bottled Water

Will Use Tap Water & the Environment Benefits

In an effort to cut pollution, limit litter, save money, and reduce greenhouse gasses, Suffolk's Legislature has prohibited the purchase of plastic single-serving water bottles by county departments.

Legislator Vilorio-Fisher, the ban's author, pointed out that huge amounts of oil are used to create plastic bottles and an enormous amount of greenhouse gasses are released during their manufacture. Also, only a small fraction of plastic water containers are recycled, and they either end up in incinerators or littering roads and parks.



Leg. Vilorio-Fisher also pointed out that bottled water costs in excess of 1,000 times the price of Suffolk tap water, water which is regularly rated among the best in the entire country. Neal Lewis of the Neighborhood Network testified in support of the bill, and noted that quality standards for tap water are more restrictive than those for bottled water. He also pointed out the energy costs to create the bottles, fill them, transport them, and recover, recycle and/or dispose of them amount to filling each bottle one-quarter full of oil.

The law does not apply to single serving bottled water if purchased as part of an underlying contract with a vending machine distributor or supplier. The Suffolk County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services is exempt, and the Department of Health Services is authorized to issue a waiver from the law if testing reveals that any public water supplied to a County building is unsafe for human consumption.



"Clean Pass Parking"

Suffolk Program First in State to Enhance Incentives for Clean Pass Vehicles

Under a law introduced by Leg. Wayne Horsley (D-Babylon) and passed by the Legislature, 2% of parking spaces at County buildings will be designated as "Green Parking" spaces for fuel-efficient vehicles that bear the NYS Clean Pass decal. The NYS Clean Pass permit is available for qualifying vehicles free of charge by contacting your local NYS DMV.

"If we are ever going to break free of foreign oil, American automakers must know that we are committed to the development of fuel-efficient vehicles." Horsley continued, "This bill is a simple gesture from the County that says we want to support those who don't support foreign-oil, and constitutes a small step in the direction of a renewable energy future."

According to estimates by the Legislature's Budget Review Office, Horsley's Green Spaces initiative would affect approximately 792 county-owned or operated buildings. This law gave Suffolk yet another "Green" first in the State, and sets an example for New York's other municipalities.



A new law sponsored by Legislator Daniel P. Losquadro (R-Shoreham), and Legislator Steven Stern requires scrap metal processors and buyers to follow new guidelines that would help police track down thieves who pawn stolen metal.

Suffolk's law is the first in the State of New York to impose crime prevention requirements on scrap metal dealers. Under these guidelines, all purchasers of scrap metal, end of life vehicles and catalytic converters are required to create a record for each purchase, which includes a copy of the seller's government issued photo identification and the date of the transaction. This information will then be entered into an

electronically searchable database that law enforcement officials may access upon request.

Any scrap metal processor or buyer that violates this provision would be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor and a fine of \$1,000 per offense for an individual purchaser or \$5,000 for a corporation. Subsequent offenses by a corporation within a two-year period would result in a felony charge carrying a \$10,000 fine.

Legislator Losquadro said "This bill gives Suffolk County the mechanism by which we can get businesses to strictly adhere to the law and at the same time give our police department the ability to track down and arrest those committing these crimes."

No Lag in Solidarity

Legislature Approves Cooper's Proposal Allowing Elected Officials to Lag Their Pay to Reduce Deficit

Everybody knows that the global recession has had a local impact right here in Suffolk County. Besides plummeting property values, and escalating home foreclosures, county government has also had to tighten its belt in the face of a \$110 million budget deficit. One of the cost-saving measures enacted by the County Legislature was a lag payroll for county workers to avoid large-scale layoffs and a resulting drastic cutback in essential services.

But now, thanks to the June 9th unanimous vote by the County Legislature approving a resolution sponsored by Majority Leader Jon Cooper (D-Lloyd Harbor), all county elected officials will be able to show solidarity with other county employees by voluntarily taking a two-week salary suspension. If all officials participate, this would save Suffolk County over \$100,000.

"This is something that I and the members of the Democratic Caucus felt we had to do right from the beginning of this economic crisis," says Cooper.

New York State law does not allow county elected officials to reduce their own salaries without first putting the plan in front of voters as a referendum. Cooper's bill sidestepped that state requirement by making participation by elected officials voluntary, allowing them to defer one day's pay for 10 consecutive two-week pay periods. Just like the lag payroll imposed by the Legislature on all other county employees, the plan allows participating elected officials to be reimbursed for their deferred salary when they leave county service.

"The recession has forced too many county residents to make tremendous sacrifices," states Cooper. "By voluntarily participating in the lag payroll, county elected officials can join in making the personal sacrifices necessary to help get Suffolk through this financial ordeal."

Fighting Helicopter Noise

Recently, the Suffolk County Legislature approved a local law sponsored by North Fork County Legislator Ed Romaine to regulate helicopter traffic over Suffolk County.

The law is in response to many months of complaints from North Shore and East End residents regarding low flying helicopters traveling to the Hamptons. An agreement between elected officials and the Eastern Region Helicopter Council, which asked pilots to fly at a minimum altitude of 2,500 feet, failed to alleviate the burden. As late as Sunday, nearly 50% of helicopters traveling to and from the East End flew below the suggested altitude; while many others flew at, or slightly, above 2,500 feet.

"This is a real victory for the residents of Suffolk County," said Legislator Ro-

maine. "Residents from Lloyd Harbor to Orient Point have been burdened by low flying helicopter traffic. The agreement with the helicopter operators failed and this local law is Suffolk's way of saying 'enough is enough.'"

Unlike past efforts to regulate helicopter traffic, the bill does not establish a minimum altitude for flights over Suffolk. Instead, it regulates pilot behavior, stating: "It shall be unlawful to operate, or for the owner to permit the operation of, any type of helicopter in a careless or reckless manner so as to endanger the life or property of others." "Careless and reckless manner" is defined as "failing to take all actions reasonably necessary for safe operation or operating at an altitude that creates a hazard or undue hardship for persons and property on the surface."

Helicopters operated by the government and those used for agriculture, aerial photography and videography, search and rescue operations, medevac, flight training, environmental testing and surveying, firefighting, and for the inspection of towers, buildings, or power lines are exempt from the law.

"I'm pleased my colleagues recognized the importance of addressing the helicopter nuisance," said Legislator Romaine. "North Shore and East End residents should not have to endure yet another summer of helicopters flying unregulated above their heads."

The bill received a veto-proof 12 votes and now goes before the County Executive for his signature.