

**PRESS RELEASE FROM
PRESIDING OFFICER WILLIAM LINDSAY**

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SUFFOLK HITS BACK AT CITY FOR MTA TAX

Hike in Hotel/Motel Tax Will Recoup Some of County Cash Funding City Transit

HAUPPAUGE, NY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2009 – Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay hailed the County Legislature's passage today of an increase in the county's hotel/motel tax, saying it will recoup some of the \$100 million increase in the MTA payroll tax that went primarily to fund New York City MTA services. Not one penny raised by the MTA payroll tax went to Suffolk County.

Suffolk County residents currently pay a grand total of nearly \$350 million in taxes to the MTA each year. All the county gets in return is high-priced and inadequate service at 40 Long Island Rail Road stations, and woefully inadequate assistance for the county's bus service.

"Nearly all of these outrageous taxes we pay to the MTA go to support services for New York City residents," said Presiding Officer Lindsay. "This increase in the hotel/motel tax is going to have almost no impact on Suffolk County residents but it will recoup from visitors from New York City some small percentage of the hundreds of millions of dollars we pay every year to support New York City's buses, subways, bridges and tunnels.

"In these tough economic times, we need to keep cutting costs but we also need to find additional sources of revenue. The increase in the hotel/motel tax will raise millions of dollars but it will cost Suffolk County residents next to nothing."

"As Executive Director of the Islip Arts Council I support this bill fully," said Lynda A. Moran. "This money will greatly help to promote tourism and the cultural arts organizations. This bill encourages the preservation of our cultural institutions and historical agencies, giving visitors to our county the opportunity to see what Suffolk County has to offer, not just farmland and beaches but art, culture and history from the western border of Suffolk County to the tip of Montauk and Orient Point."

The hotel/motel tax will increase from its current .75 percent to 3 percent, perhaps as early as this December. That will result in revenue from the tax more than tripling.

The hotel/motel tax generated \$1,905,406 in 2008, with the rate at .75 percent. It is expected that the tax will generate \$1,653,892 in 2009. But with hotel/motel tax rate increasing to 3 percent next year, it is estimated that it would yield nearly seven million dollars, a huge increase at a time when Suffolk County faces a deficit of \$125 million in 2009, with 2010 shaping up as an equally difficult year fiscally.

"The MTA payroll tax was highway robbery and this increase in our hotel/motel tax is a small step toward restoring fair play between the city and Suffolk County," said Presiding Officer Lindsay.