

# KATE BROWNING NEWS

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COUNTY LEGISLATURE

## Media Release

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## Browning Earns Passage of Bill Authorizing A Traffic Light at Treacherous Intersection

*Legislator Addresses Serious Safety Threat at Rustic Road*

**Riverhead, NY-** The Suffolk County Legislature today approved Third District County Legislator Kate Browning's bill to install a stop light at the treacherous intersection of Rustic Road and Yaphank-Middle Island Road in Yaphank. The intersection is so dangerous that the Longwood School District changed bus routes years ago to avoid the intersection, which means students have to spend much additional time on the roundabout route to and from school.

The County Department of Public Works has declined to install a traffic light at the intersection, so Legislator Browning decided she had to tackle the issue herself by filing legislation authorizing the installation of the traffic light. That legislation was adopted by the Legislature Tuesday at its meeting in Riverhead.

"Anyone who has ever tried to make a left turn off Rustic Road onto Yaphank-Middle Island Road knows how dangerous that is, and a traffic signal will end this threat to our children and every resident who uses the intersection," said Legislator Browning. "The intersection is an accident waiting to happen every single day. Protecting the safety of our residents is my primary responsibility, and a traffic light at this intersection does just that."

In a letter to Legislator Browning, Longwood Schools Superintendent Allan Gerstenlauer said: "The road is curved with limited sight distance; it is heavily traveled throughout the day, but particularly at peak periods in the morning and late afternoon; there is a great deal of heavy truck traffic; and traffic travels at a high rate of speed, typically well in excess of posted speed limits. Heightening my concern for the safety of children in the Longwood community is the fact that Yaphank-Middle Island Road serves as a major transportation route for school buses carrying students to and from our Middle School, located on CR21, Charles E. Walters Elementary School in Yaphank, and the Junior High and Senior High Schools on Longwood Road. Approximately 6,500 students attend those four schools, most of whom will be transported on CR21. It is essential to take whatever traffic cautioning measures we can to improve safety on this route."

The Epilepsy Foundation has a home on Rustic Road and their disabled clients utilize buses. The bus company the Foundation uses also has banned its buses from making left turns from Rustic Road.

In a letter to Legislator Browning, Epilepsy Foundation Residence Manager Andrea DiVita said: "This residence was opened in December of 2008 and since that time we have had difficulty on numerous occasions when we are trying to leave the neighborhood. This is a very busy road with a heavy flow of traffic, especially during rush hour. On many occasions we have had to sit and wait to leave for as many as ten to fifteen minutes."

"We also have buses that come to the house to take the individuals to work or day program," continued DiVita. "The bus companies will no longer make a left turn out of the neighborhood in fear of

getting in an accident. This causes the individuals to sit on the bus for extended amounts of time while they take alternate routes.”

“I feel the traffic situation here is a terrible danger to the individuals who live here in Yaphank, the staff and the community. We would definitely benefit from a light being installed at the corner of Rustic Road and Yaphank Middle Island Road to ensure that everyone is kept safe.”