



Assemblyman
Steve Otis



Legislative Update

Winter 2020

Dear Friends,

Earlier in the year I shared the thought that there are no bystanders in our fight against Covid-19. While the number of infections, hospitalizations and deaths diminished during the summer, we are now in the middle of the next wave. Nationwide the upcoming months are predicted to be the most dangerous to date for the spread of this dangerous and deadly disease.

In mid-October Westchester County had 795 active cases. By the first week in December that count surpassed 6,200. On the Sound Shore we went from 250 active cases to 1,317 in the same seven-week time period. It is tragic that over 27,000 New Yorkers have died from Covid-19 since March, including 1,500 Westchester residents. The time for further action is now. Each of us plays a vital role in protecting our family, friends, co-workers and neighbors. The new spread underscores the need to take preventive measures, get tested and seek guidance if you test positive. This newsletter includes updated information on Covid-19 testing and available public health resources.

In what has been a challenging year with the pandemic, let us use this holiday season to treasure our families, think of those friends we have lost but remain in our thoughts, and reflect upon a year that has been like no other. Let us think of the first responders and frontline workers who have played key roles while putting themselves at risk. Most importantly, let us hope and work for a brighter, safer future in 2021.

Warm regards,

Steven Otis
State Assemblyman



In November, I joined local officials for the delivery of masks and sanitizer from the state and county to New Rochelle residents. I was joined by County Executive George Latimer, Mayor Noam Bramson, County Legislator Terry Clements, City Councilwomen Yádira Ramos-Herbert and Martha Lopez-Hanratty.

Here to Help

I continue to work with local governments, school districts and not-for-profits to address the many Covid-19 related issues that arise. To reduce the spread of the infection, I helped organize a Port Chester Covid-19 Virtual Summit with Senator Shelley Mayer, Port Chester Mayor Fritz Falanka and County Legislator Nancy Barr, which was held on December 3rd.

Covid-19 has created many new challenges and needs for our families and small businesses. During the course of the year, my staff and I have worked on a wide variety of problems that involve assistance with unemployment insurance, rental housing programs, access to senior care facilities and the many issues that arise with state agencies. Please let me know how my office can be of assistance to you by emailing OtisS@nyassembly.gov or calling my District Office at 914-939-7028.

New State Website Helps New Yorkers Access Services and Benefits

New York State has launched a new web application to help New Yorkers find state services and benefits. The “Find Services” web application was developed in partnership with Google.org to assist New Yorkers in locating appropriate services with one streamlined web application. It is unfortunate that due to the pandemic, we are seeing an unprecedented demand for social services. This application provides an easy-to-use starting point for first-time program users. Go to <https://findservices.ny.gov/app/survey> to learn more.

District Office: 222 Grace Church Street • Port Chester, NY 10573 • 914-939-7028
Albany Office: Room 327, Legislative Office Bldg. • Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-4897
Email: otiss@nyassembly.gov • **Website:** nyassembly.gov/mem/Steven-Otis

Focus on Utility Storm Response Issues Continues

Throughout the fall I have continued to participate in regular meetings to address the many shortcomings of electric utilities and telecommunications companies in storm preparedness, response and service restoration. The inadequacy of staffing and response continues to be an issue for utilities around the state, including the companies that serve our region.

My focus has been on the importance of instituting a time-based service restoration standard: a target to meet for restoration of service. Utilities should have the necessary levels of staffing, equipment and outside assistance to restore service in a timely manner. Six to ten days without service is unacceptable. In addition to the staffing inadequacies, there

is need for improvement in response planning, coordination with local governments and in providing customers with accurate information about the status of outages and restoration times.

As a member of the Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions that has jurisdiction over the laws controlling the Public Service Commission, I have been working with an ad hoc group of local officials, state legislators and county officials on reviewing the August storm response and developing proposals for state legislation and Public Service Commission action.

Covid-19 Alert New York

New phone app flags Covid-19 exposure. Add your phone. Stop the spread.

The state has launched a mobile contact tracing app that will notify you if you've been potentially exposed to a Covid-19-positive person.

If another person using the app spends 10 minutes within six feet of you, your phones will swap random codes to remember the contact. According to the Governor's office, the codes don't record anything about the individual or their location. If a contact tests positive within the next few days, the app will send you an alert about your exposure.

The app also features a "health log" option that lets someone track their health by storing a log of any symptoms. The app asks users whether they are experiencing symptoms such as fatigue, a headache, fever or sore throat, and also for information including their county of residence, age range, and ethnicity.

Search for 'Covid Alert New York' in the App Store to download.

Department of Motor Vehicles Resumes Select Services

The DMV has resumed select services with restrictions and new guidelines in place. Please see the guidance on reopening and visiting an office and making a reservation online by going to <https://dmv.ny.gov/more-info/dmv-reopening-guidance>. All driver licenses and driver permits that expired March 1, 2020 or after, continue to be extended by Executive Order through at least January 1, 2021. Vehicle registrations (including temporary auto dealer registration), state inspections and non-driver identification cards that expired March 1, 2020 or after, are no longer valid and must be renewed.

The DMV also offers more than 60 transactions online, making it fast and convenient for all New Yorkers to complete transactions they need, including:

- select driver license services, such as renewing or replacing a license
- vehicle transactions, such as renewing or replacing a registration
- requests for DMV records, like crash reports or driving abstracts
- address change
- paying fines and fees for suspensions and civil penalties
- pleading or paying New York City traffic tickets

For more information, please visit: <https://dmv.ny.gov>

Shared Work Program: Small Business Support

The Shared Work program is designed to help employers manage business cycles and seasonal adjustments while helping to spare their workers the hardships of full unemployment. The program allows employers to keep trained employees and avoid layoffs by allowing staff members to receive partial Unemployment Insurance benefits while working reduced hours. The Shared Work Program helps keep trained, productive employees on the job during temporary business downturns, meaning New York businesses can gear up quickly when conditions improve, and New York workers get to stay on the job. Full-time, part-time and seasonal employees are eligible.

For more information, please visit the Department of Labor website at <https://dol.ny.gov/shared-work-program-0>.

Governor Signs Legislation Giving Local Governments Advance Notice of Major Layoffs

Governor Cuomo has signed legislation that Senator Shelley Mayer and I sponsored to require that employers provide written notice to localities and school districts where they remit taxes when a mass layoff is being considered.

Requiring notice in state law is important because local governments may have to address health and safety dangers with respect to a large abandoned property and the potential loss of revenue may require significant and immediate budgetary changes by municipalities and school districts.

In addition, early notice may provide the opportunity for local governments to work with a business considering a move to find better solutions.

The legislation originated after Doral Arrowwood in Rye Brook announced their closing last December, just 20 days before doing so. The short notice had major implications for local taxpayers in the Village of Rye Brook, the Town of Rye and the Blind Brook School District. Not only is Arrowwood a major taxpayer, but also the circumstances of the closure raised issues of public safety regarding securing the property that may have become the responsibility of the village.



Assemblyman Otis toured the New Rochelle YMCA with CEO Jennifer Ryan Safsel to review important capital projects at the Y funded by major state grant funding secured through the State Assembly.



Earth Day in November Assemblyman Otis and County Legislator Nancy Barr helped pickup garbage along Bowman Avenue in Rye Brook as part of a multi-community cleanup day sponsored by environmental groups in Rye Brook, Port Chester, Town of Rye and City of Rye. Volunteers at four different locations made a difference.

Playland Beach Open for Dog Walks

Playland Beach has been opened for the annual beach dog walking season (Sept 28-May 2).

Playland Beach and many other local public parks have provided ways for safe shared-use areas for dogs and their families. Whenever you go to any park, please follow local rules that apply.

I have been a long-time advocate for carefully planned dog access to public parks. For many years the Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation and the staff at Playland have done a great job to make the winter beach access season a success.

Please find Playland's Beach rules below.



NYS Thruway Authority Executive Director Matthew Driscoll visited with Port Chester officials on the completion of the Grace Church Street Bridge, part of the Last Mile Project. Pictured are Village Manager Chris Steers, NYS Senator Shelley Mayer, Mayor Fritz Falanka, Director Driscoll, NYS Assemblyman Otis and Westchester County Director of Operations Joan McDonald.

Playland Beach Off-Season Use Rules

Monday, September 28, 2020 to Sunday, May 2, 2021
Dawn to Dusk
(SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND CLOSURE)

Dog Owners/Custodians Are Responsible for the Following:

- DOG WALKING SERVICES ARE PROHIBITED ON PLAYLAND PROPERTY.
- LIMIT OF THREE DOGS PER PERSON AT ANY TIME.
- ALWAYS CLOSE GATES to the beach upon entering and exiting.
- Dogs must be restrained by a leash not exceeding six feet in length on Playland property, until entering the beach and closing the gate.
- Leashes must be carried on the beach in case of an emergency or altercation.
- Dogs cannot be left unattended and must be within view and voice control.
- Dog waste must be promptly removed and disposed of in proper receptacles.
- Dogs must be licensed, current with shots, in good health and wearing a collar.
- Current license tags and identification must be available at all times.
- Know your dog! IF DOG IS AGGRESSIVE, PLEASE DO NOT BRING THEM.
- Swimming and walking on the rock jetty are prohibited.
- Persons entering this area agree to indemnify and hold harmless the County of Westchester or any claims resulting from use of this area.

In case of an EMERGENCY, CALL 911
For more non-emergencies, call Westchester County Police Dispatch, 914-864-7701

New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



Assemblyman
**Steve
Otis**

Legislative Update

Winter 2020

PRSRT STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Albany, New York
Permit No. 75

In October I attended the painting of Mamaroneck's Black Lives Matter roadway installation by Columbus Park. There was a spirit of unity and hope at the event, coupled with a beautifully designed Mamaroneck version of this nationwide call for racial equality.



Home for the Holidays

As many of us to look forward to spending the holiday season closer to home and with out-of-state travel carrying its own set of challenges, I want to encourage you to shop locally.

Many local chambers of commerce have developed websites to illustrate the many offerings of our villages and towns.

In addition, vacationing in-state avoids quarantine and testing requirements.