



Assemblyman

Steve Otis



91st Assembly District

Larchmont - Mamaroneck - New Rochelle - Port Chester - Rye Brook and Rye

June 27, 2023

Dear Friends,

Last week the Assembly returned to Albany to complete the regular legislative session with the passage of several measures requiring our attention before any possible special sessions later in the year.

One measure was an important piece of environmental legislation I carried with Senator Shelley Mayer to provide a statutory preference for nature-based projects for shoreline areas. These principles help protect coastal communities from flood damage, shoreline erosion, and habitat degradation. This is an important measure for the Sound Shore. A full description of the legislation is provided in our press release included below.

We also passed legislation to place a hold on the dumping of radioactive material into the Hudson River as part of the decommissioning of the Indian Point Nuclear Power plant. I have participated in press conferences on this issue in Westchester and Albany.

More legislative updates will follow in future e-mails. As always, do not hesitate to contact my office if we can be of assistance at 914-939-7028.

Warm regards,



Senator Shelley Mayer and Assemblyman Steve Otis Pass Legislation to Protect Shorelines and the Environment from Increased Climate Change Related Hazards

(ALBANY, NY) - Communities across New York State face intensifying climate change related hazards, including dangerous floods, and the New York State Senate and Assembly have now passed an important bill which will protect our shorelines and environment from these threats. S.5186A/A.5221A, sponsored by Senator Shelley B. Mayer and Assemblyman Steve Otis passed the Assembly on June 21, preceded by passage in the Senate on June 5. The bill, if signed by Governor Hochul, will require the Department of Environmental

Conservation to encourage the use of nature-based solutions as the preferred approach for stabilizing tidal shorelines in the oversight and regulatory decisions of the agency.

Hurricane Ida devastated communities and homes across New York, particularly those along the Sound Shore communities of our district. Seventeen New Yorkers lost their lives, and the storm caused \$7.5 billion in damages, including damage to 11,000 homes and many roads. As storms become more frequent, intense, and dangerous due to climate change, our communities become more vulnerable to these threats. Nature-based solutions, or living shorelines, are shoreline management techniques that are supported or inspired by nature or natural processes and functions and are designed to mimic natural shorelines, improving the resilience of our shorelines and communities. Living shorelines have a [wide range of benefits](#), including: the reduction of flooding and erosion, improved water quality, providing greater stability against threats of storms, attracting wildlife, and many more. The bill was inspired by the work of Save the Sound and Riverkeeper, two major advocacy organizations confronting the impacts of climate change on water bodies and inland areas.

Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, “After Hurricane Ida, many constituents reached out to me for assistance with flood damage. I was happy my office could help individuals but the systemic impact of climate change requires much more. This bill will encourage DEC to adopt a more proactive approach to regulatory oversight of shoreline management that will assist our shore communities in reducing the likelihood of flooding and water damage. I thank Save the Sound and Riverkeeper for their work inspiring this bill in their efforts to combat climate change and for working with my office on this legislation.”

Assemblyman Steve Otis said, “Living shoreline principles are vital to improving coastal resilience, reducing flood impacts, preventing shoreline erosion and protecting natural habitats. This legislation will help advance these nature-based

policies at a time when sound practices are needed. Thanks go to Riverkeeper, The Nature Conservancy, Save the Sound and other environmental groups in supporting this measure. This is important legislation for coastal communities.”

“The passage of the Living Shorelines Act marks a major step forward for responsible management of shorelines along tidal waterways in New York State, and will help ensure that permitting decisions support natural shorelines that provide both habitat for wildlife and flood protections for communities,” said Jeremy Cherson, Senior Manager of Government Affairs for Riverkeeper. “Thank you Senator Mayer and Assemblyman Otis for recognizing the importance our shorelines can play in promoting biodiversity and thriving communities. We strongly urge Governor Hochul to sign this legislation as soon as possible.”

David Ansel, Vice President of Water Protection, Save the Sound, “We thank Senator Mayer for her leadership in passing the Living Shorelines bill. This important legislation will strengthen NYSDEC’s ability to prioritize living shorelines over hardened shorelines in project permits, protect coastal communities from erosion, storm surge, and sea level rise, and help restore critical habitat for Long Island Sound. Nature-based features have the ability to adapt to changing conditions, making them an essential tool for strengthening resiliency in the face of climate change. We are actively involved in a restoration project nearby in Little Neck Bay, and look forward to finding opportunities to utilize living shorelines to stabilize the coastline along the Sound Shore of Westchester County.”

Legislation Passes to Prohibit Radiological Discharges into Hudson River



One piece of legislation that remained pending and was of importance to many Westchester residents passed last week (A.[7208](#)). I co-sponsored this measure to prohibit radiological discharges into the Hudson River in connection with the decommissioning of the Indian Point nuclear power plant. With greater awareness among many area residents of the practices for how waste materials are treated, there was great interest in making sure that radiological water even

in small quantities not be discharged into the Hudson, although this had been the practice for several decades.

The discharge of nuclear waste into the Hudson River still posed a substantial risk to real estate values and the economic development of those communities along the river. Penalizing the discharge of radiological substances into the Hudson River is necessary to preserve the economic vitality of this important region and other methods of waste management from decommissioning nuclear power plants are available that would not result in the same economic impacts

Public perception of a polluted, hazardous river would have undermined the local economy, harming property values and business interests. The Hudson River has made great strides in the past few decades to become a healthier ecosystem for wildlife and people alike to live, work, and play. People are rightfully concerned about returning to previous industrial practices of treating our rivers like industrial dumping grounds.

New York's Water Quality Funding Application Period Remains Open

New York State's nation-leading clean water infrastructure programs have surpassed \$5 billion since 2015. The 2023-24 Enacted Budget includes the \$500 million in clean water funding for the upcoming year, programs I have supported and promoted every year.

In addition, the Governor launched Community Assistance Teams this year to expand EFC's technical assistance program and help small, rural, and disadvantaged communities leverage this funding to address their clean water infrastructure needs. Any community that needs help with their water infrastructure needs is encouraged to contact EFC at efc.ny.gov/CAT.

EFC is accepting applications until July 28 for the next round of [WIIA/IMG](#) grant funding totaling \$425 million. This round of funding is available through existing state resources and the first spending under the voter-approved \$4.2 billion [Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act](#), which specifically named EFC's grant programs as tools for leveraging funding for water quality improvement and resilient infrastructure.

The Bond Act is advancing historic levels of funding to update aging water infrastructure and protect water quality, strengthen communities' ability to withstand severe storms and flooding, reduce air pollution and lower climate-altering emissions, restore habitats, and preserve outdoor spaces and local farms. Disadvantaged Communities will receive at least 35 percent of the benefits of Bond Act funding, with a goal of 40 percent.

New York State is hosting on-site and virtual listening sessions for communities to learn more about Bond Act funding opportunities and to weigh in on the draft eligibility guidelines being developed to identify potential projects. Go to the [Bond Act website](#) to learn more and register for upcoming sessions. Our regional session will be held in **White Plains August 15th**.

Additional water quality grant funding is available through Round 13 of the Governor's [Consolidated Funding Application](#). This includes EFC's [Green Innovation](#) and [Engineering Planning Grant](#) programs, and DEC's [Water Quality Improvement Project](#) program. The CFA application deadline is July 28.

Legislation Ensures Reproductive Health Care Through Telehealth Services to Patients in States Where Abortion Services are Outlawed or Restricted

Governor Hochul signed legislation to protect New York based doctors providing medication abortion services through telehealth to out-of-state patients. I was a co-sponsor of the bill ([A.1709B](#)). This bill expands and strengthens access to reproductive health care and protect patients and doctors who require abortion care through telehealth services. This legislation expands the current law to ensure doctors, medical providers, and facilitators in the state are able to provide telehealth services to patients outside of New York without fear of litigation in states where abortion services are outlawed or restricted.



The Sharing Shelf

[The Sharing Shelf](#) based out of Port Chester, has recently launched an initiative to pick-up donations to help address clothing insecurity in Westchester County.

They have an acute need for spring and summer clothing for infants, children and teens. Last year, the Sharing Shelf provided a Wardrobe Pack to 4,365 children and teens and since January 2023 they have experienced a 42% increase in demand. Your clothing donations are critical to meeting this need and allowing The Sharing Shelf to provide clothing to children and teens.

Priority will be given to those who have donations of clothing for infants, children and teens. Donations can also be dropped off at their Clothing Bank in Port Chester or Miller's in Mamaroneck.

[Register a Pick-Up](#)

There is a suggested donation of \$10 per home to help offset the cost of this new service.

