



May 17, 2024

Dear Neighbors,

It was an exciting week as one of my bills passed the Assembly, I joined rallies for the Fashion Act bill that I champion and Parole Justice bills, and the DEC issued an important ruling on the cryptocurrency mining facility Greenidge. Read on for highlights from the week as well as my final FY2025 state budget review section focusing on public safety and corrections!

DEC Upholds Cryptominer Greenidge Generation Permit Denial

We celebrated a big win this week as the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) [upheld the air permit denial of the cryptomining facility Greenidge Generation](#), finding that the permit is inconsistent with the greenhouse gas emission limits set forth by the CLCPA. Greenidge Generation, located on the western shore of Seneca Lake in Dresden, NY, is a gas-fired power plant that previously only operated to provide power to New York's grid in times of peak demand. Now, Greenidge is a facility burning fracked gas 24/7 for the mining of Bitcoin, emitting approximately 776 million pounds of carbon annually, the equivalent of 84,000 cars on the road. Greenidge's air permit was initially denied in 2022, but the company has been appealing the decision for 2 years and has been allowed to remain in operation throughout the appeal process. While Greenidge has the right to appeal this latest decision to the State Court, this is an important ruling, confirming the DEC's authority to deny permits and upholding New York's commitment to our climate goals.

I have strongly advocated against proof-of-work cryptomining and was proud to sponsor the legislation in 2022 that Governor Hochul signed into law placing a two-year moratorium on cryptocurrency mining. In every place

cryptocurrency mining operations have settled into power plants, the results are the same: excessive greenhouse gas emissions, a high volume of heated water needing treatment from an overtaxed water treatment system, constant noise pollution, and very little economic benefit to the region. I joined advocates to celebrate this decision during a virtual press conference, and you [view a video of my comments](#).



State Budget

Public Safety Policies and Corrections

The FY2025 budget included a number of policies related to public safety and the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS).

As a member of the Corrections Committee in the Assembly, I am committed to enacting policies that promote personal growth and transformation within our carceral system so that when individuals return to our communities after incarceration, they have the skills and opportunities to support themselves and contribute to society, which has been shown to significantly increase public safety for all. I continue to champion this session, for strong data-driven solutions including my sponsored legislation the Earned Time Act ([A1128](#)). Prioritizing workforce development, education and incentivizing good behavior not only reduces violence between incarcerated individuals and against corrections staff and volunteers but against probation officers as well. It also significantly reduces recidivism rates. Promoting the comprehensive use of earned time in the carceral system is a common sense measure to promote public safety.

Cannabis: Some NYS retail shops have been selling cannabis products without a state-issued license, and new policy allows the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) to padlock businesses who are in violation of state law. Egregious violations, including selling to minors, violent behavior toward investigators, reports of hospitalization due to consumption of their products, and unlicensed processing of cannabis, would result in immediate padlocking. Others would be padlocked upon second inspection, if still in violation. New law also allows cities and counties to conduct regulatory

inspections of businesses not listed on OCM's directory of licensed cannabis businesses, seize cannabis from businesses operating without a license, and padlock businesses in violation of state law.

Retail Theft: New policy proposed as central priorities by the executive was passed in the budget to address large organized retail theft rings that have grown in the state, protecting businesses and the safety of retail workers. Assault on a retail worker is a new classification of crime and is a Class E Felony. In addition, when a person is accused of a series of thefts, the new policy allows prosecutors to combine the value of the stolen goods from different stores, possibly reaching a higher larceny threshold, when those items were stolen under the same criminal scheme. To assist businesses, the budget included \$5 million in funding to provide \$3,000 tax credits for small businesses that invest a certain amount in security measures, like cameras or security systems. \$40.2 million in funding was also included for dedicated retail theft teams within NYS Police and local law enforcement departments.

Hate Crimes: To combat a rise in hate crimes, the budget includes \$35 million for the Securing Communities Against Hate Grant to protect houses of worship, religious schools and other at-risk sites, as well as expands the list of eligible offenses that can be considered hate crimes.

Closing Correctional Facilities: The enacted budget authorizes the governor to close up to five Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) facilities during this fiscal year, providing at least 90 days notice prior to any closure.



Legislative Update

Bill to Increase EV Charging Stations in State-Owned Parking Facilities Passes the Assembly

As we work toward our CLCPA climate goals and electrification of vehicles, we need to build capacity for electric vehicle (EV) charging. I am proud that my bill to increase plug-in EV charging stations in state-owned parking facilities ([A4871B](#)) passed the Assembly! The bill requires state-owned parking lots and facilities with 50-200 spaces to have 10% of spaces for EV charging and lots with 200+ spaces to have 20% of spaces for EV charging. Currently, [approximately 4.8% of registered vehicles in New York are EVs](#). However, technology is changing rapidly, and the demand for electric vehicles is growing. We need to build charging infrastructure not only for the current demand but also for future demand. Many consumers are interested in transitioning to clean energy vehicles but are concerned with charging station limitations within the state, and this bill will help address those concerns. You can watch [a video of an explanation of the bill](#) as well as [my comments from the Assembly floor](#).



Fashion Act Rally

Fashion brands, retailers, advocates, celebrities, and lawmakers joined together in Albany this week for a rally calling for the passage of my sponsored legislation, the Fashion Act ([A4333](#)). The fashion industry has never been globally regulated and is responsible for approximately 8% of all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions globally. By comparison, the entire United States is responsible for 11% of all GHG emissions globally. We are already experiencing the damaging effects of climate change and spending billions of dollars as a nation in response to the effects. We need to act, and this bill will establish a legal framework for fashion brands selling in New York State to adopt and comply with standards of environmental sustainability. There are many brands who want to be and are producing fashion in a sustainable way, but they struggle to compete financially with fast-fashion brands who produce cheap clothing at high costs to the environment. The bill would create an even playing field for all apparel and

footwear brands as the fashion industry addresses its impact on pollution and the environment. There is a strong [coalition of supporters](#) for the bill and I look forward to it moving in the Assembly this session! Watch [a video of my comments](#) at the rally.



Rally for Parole Justice

We have a system of corrections, not punishment. When individuals have worked to transform their lives, and we do not recognize that change - that correction - then our system is simply one of punishment. I proudly joined advocates and fellow legislators in Albany this week for a rally for Parole Justice, advocating for the passage of the Fair & Timely Parole ([S307/A162](#)) and Elder Parole ([S2423/A2035](#)) bills before session ends. These bills provide incarcerated individuals an *opportunity* to be seen by a parole board to demonstrate their transformation and contrary to what some say, are not

simply a free pass out of prison. I look forward to their swift passage! Watch a [video of my comments](#) at the rally.



Around the District

Better Together for Mental Health

As we work as a community to end the stigma around mental health issues and increase access to mental health care, I was grateful to join and support the Better Together for Mental Health event at Stewart Park in Ithaca. Thank you to the event organizers who brought together non-profit organizations and mental health providers to provide information as well as artists, performers, musicians, and food vendors for a fun day! What a great community event as we recognize May as Mental Health Awareness Month! You can [watch a video of my comments](#) from the day.



Open Doors English Celebration

Open Doors English first opened in Ithaca in 2019 and has evolved into an essential organization for immigrants and refugees to learn English as a second language. Its mission is to aid students in improving their lives by providing affordable and comprehensive English classes to adult learners of all levels, statuses and incomes in order to empower them to get jobs, volunteer, make connections, apply to and attend university, pursue U.S. citizenship, and engage with the community. I was honored to attend their annual celebration and present an official Assembly citation to recognize their work. Thank you for your continued dedication to our community!



Laughing Goat Farm Open House and Fashion Act Chat

Snuggling baby animals is one of my favorite forms of stress relief! I had a great time at the Laughing Goat Fiber Farm_Open House, and I appreciated the opportunity to give an informal talk on the legislation I sponsor, the Sustainability and Social Accountability Fashion Act ([A4333](#)). As I also shared above, this is an important piece of legislation that will have a global impact requiring brands that sell in NYS and that have a gross annual revenue of over \$100 million to meet environmental standards throughout their entire supply chain for the first time in history for this industry. This will have a direct positive impact on New York State fiber, fabric, and the fashion industry.



Intern Appreciation

Interns play an important role in the administration of my office while gaining skills and experience, and I deeply appreciate their contributions. As our spring semester interns conclude their time in the office, I want to say thank you! In the Ithaca office, thank you to **Barbara Batycka, Tristan Lee, Alice Burke, Wendy Lau, Viola Wai and Adriana Ramirez**. In the Albany office, thank you to **Michael Williams** who participated in the Assembly internship program for the semester and will be staying on with my team through the legislative session. It has been a pleasure getting to know you all, and I look forward to all you will accomplish in the future!



Community Resources

Tompkins County Senior Discount Directory

May is Older Americans Month! This month, Love Living at Home compiled a directory of businesses that offer a discount on goods and services for seniors in Tompkins County. Access the online directory at their Web site! Remember to always ask for your senior discount and share this free resource with others!

Edna A. Lauterbach Home Care Scholarship for NYS Nurses

Home care needs nurses! This scholarship, up to \$6,200, is designed to encourage New York State LPNs and RNs to pursue a life-long career in home and community-based care – a growing field that needs high-quality nurses. Nurses licensed in New York State can use these funds for tuition to explore or expand their career in home or community-based care! The application period is now open, and the application deadline is June 1. For more information and to apply, visit the NYSHCP Web site. Questions can be directed to Caroline Casale at their Web site or 518-463-1118, ext. 824.

Grant Action News

The Assembly publishes the Grant Actions News monthly, compiling great grant opportunities from state, federal and private agencies, and you can now review the [May 2024 edition](#). All not-for-profit applicants applying for state grants must pre-qualify on the [NYS Grants Management Website](#). Potential not-for-profit applicants are strongly encouraged to begin the

process of registering and pre-qualifying immediately, as this is a lengthy process.



In good health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Anna R. Kelles'.

Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

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