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Assemblyman **Fred W. Thiele, Jr.** **2014 Legislative Summary**

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Dear Constituent:

The 2014 Session of the State Legislature has now concluded and substantial progress was made on many important issues. For the fourth consecutive year, the State Legislature passed an on-time budget that included the lowest State income tax rates in 60 years and a two year real property tax freeze. State spending was limited to a less than 2% increase. Important priorities were funded, including a \$1.1 billion increase in aid to education, increases to improve road and bridge infrastructure, and an increase to the State Environmental Protection Fund.

My goal has been to be an independent and effective State Legislator who represents the residents of Eastern Long Island. A recent New York Public Interest Research Group analysis of the 2014 Legislative Session demonstrates this fact. I had a 98.7% attendance record for the 1,160 votes held this Session. I was ranked one of the least partisan legislators in terms of voting with party leadership. At the same time, I ranked fifth of 150 members in terms of getting legislation passed through both houses of the State Legislature. I was also appointed the Chair of the Assembly Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology.

Enclosed is a review of some of the highlights of the 2014 Session and how it affected us here on Long Island.

Sincerely,

Fred W. Thiele, Jr.

BUDGET WRAP-UP



For the first time since Perry Duryea represented us back in the 1970s, the State of New York has enacted four on-time budgets in a row. More importantly, the State Budget again holds the line on spending and taxes. State spending increased by only 1.8%. State income tax rates are at the lowest level in 60 years. Further, the State Budget includes a two year freeze on property taxes for localities that comply with the 2% property tax cap, totaling \$1.5 billion in tax relief. The Estate Tax exemption was increased from \$1 million to \$5.25 million, a major benefit to farmers and small businesses.

At the same time, the State was able to invest in its top priorities. The State Budget includes a \$1.1 billion or 5.3% increase in aid to education. The first steps were taken to reform the poorly implemented Common Core standards. Base aid to our local community colleges was increased by \$75 per student to \$2,497. The State Environmental Protection Fund was increased by \$9 million to \$162 million. The State also increased library funding over the Governor's recommendation by \$5 million to \$87.9 million. Finally, State aid to local government for road repair was increased by \$40 million, reflecting increased needs from the harsh winter.

THIELE APPOINTED CHAIR OF LIBRARY COMMITTEE

In January, I was appointed the Chair of the Assembly Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology. I am pleased with the successes we have had in my first year as Chair. The Legislature made libraries an important priority during the budget process by increasing library funding by \$5 million more than recommended by the Governor to \$87.9 million. In addition, the Governor signed A.8732 into law which extends the Library Construction Grant Program from 2015 to 2020. This State fund provides \$14 million annually in capital funds to local libraries for renovation and upgrades. Just this past year, John Jermain Library (Sag Harbor), East Hampton Library, and Montauk Library all received State grants from this fund.



New York State Public Library Construction Grant

Assemblyman Thiele congratulates Catherine Creedon, Director of the John Jermain Memorial Library, Library staff, and members of the John Jermain Memorial Library Board of Trustees on a recent \$75,054 New York State Public Library Construction Grant.

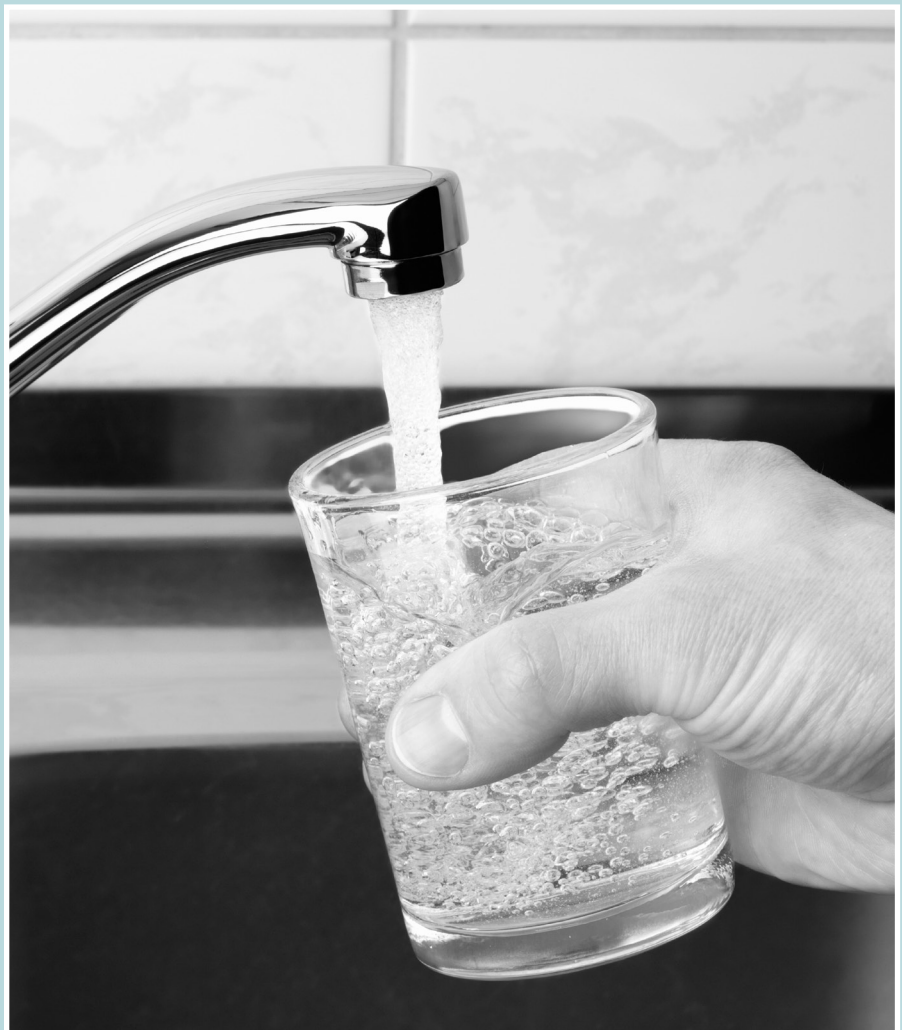
PROTECTING OUR DRINKING WATER

It has been well documented by Suffolk County and the State that the water quality on Long Island is continuing to decline. While previous efforts such as the Peconic Bay National Estuary Program, the Central Pine Barrens Act, land preservation, and land use regulations have all kept the problem from being even worse, we need to do more if we are going to avoid a water quality crisis that will destroy our environment and economy. I am firmly convinced that the keys to reversing the decline are (1) infrastructure improvements for the disposal of our septic wastes and (2) enacting best practices for exiting land uses.

The State Assembly passed the Long Island Water Quality Control Act by a vote of 112-24 this past June. The bill represents a comprehensive approach to providing the kind of governmental accountability and new technology that will be necessary to improve our groundwater and surface waters. Hopefully, the State Senate will pass the bill before the end of the year.

In addition, the 2014 State Budget includes \$3 million in State Environmental Protection Fund money for Suffolk County, Southampton Town, and Stony Brook University for the research and development of cost effective methods to reduce

nitrogen loading from our septic systems. The replacement of ineffective, old septic systems with cost-effective state of the art systems is an integral part of improving water quality. I commend Southampton Town Supervisor Anna Throne-Holst for her leadership on this initiative.



COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUND REPORT

Fifteen years ago, under legislation I sponsored with State Senator Ken LaValle, the Towns of East Hampton, Riverhead, Shelter Island, Southampton, and Riverhead began the Community Preservation Fund (CPF). The CPF utilizes a 2% real estate transfer tax to fund land preservation for open space, farmland, parks, and historic preservation.

Since 1999, the CPF has generated \$930 million. Nearly 10,000 acres have been protected, ensuring that the East End's environment and economy are sustainable.

As the nation is still recovering from the recession, the CPF is going strong. Last year, the CPF generated \$95.4 million, the most since 2007. So far, in 2014, the CPF is ahead of 2013 by 4.3%. This is good news on several fronts. First, it means the East End economy is recovering from the recession faster than the rest of New York and the nation. It also means that our towns will have the resources needed to ensure that conservation can keep pace with increasing development pressure.



Hospitality Business Investment Real Property Tax Exemption

Assemblyman Thiele joins Senator Ken LaValle and Southampton Town Councilman Stan Glinka in urging the Governor to sign legislation (S.7229-B/A.9533-B) that would create a hospitality business investment real property tax exemption into law. The Assemblyman and Senator were approached by Councilman Glinka regarding the short supply of suitable hotels, motels and similar hospitality-related businesses in the Town of Southampton. This legislation seeks to help grow the tourism industry within the Town by expanding and improving its supply of hospitality enterprises through offering a tax exemption.

*Pictured, from left to right: Ivan Sun (owner of Bayview Resort), Senator Ken LaValle, Assemblyman Fred Thiele, Southampton Town Councilman Stan Glinka, Southampton Town Councilwoman Christine Scalera, and Danielle Sun (owner of Bayview Resort).

EAST END ROAD PROJECTS ADVANCE

Critical to public safety and the local economy is a well maintained highway system.

State roads are a critical part of that system on the East End. This past spring, the State Department of Transportation completed the re-pavement of Route 27 from its intersection with County Road 39 in Southampton to East Hampton Village.

This fall, two other major projects will be undertaken. First, re-paving of Route 27 will continue from East Hampton Village to Montauk. The second project will re-pave Route 24 from Hampton Bays to the traffic circle in Riverside. In addition, the Governor has signed my legislation into law authorizing a land swap between Suffolk County and Southampton Town for the upgrading of the Riverside traffic circle, a key component in the revitalization of the Riverside, Flanders, and Northampton area.

The State has also provided \$40 million in State aid to Towns and Villages to repair local roads damaged by the harsh winter. Finally, I will be pursuing State

funds for road projects for County Road 80 (Main Street) in Hampton Bays, safety improvements for Route 114 in East Hampton Village, and local roads on Shelter Island.



LYME DISEASE/MENTAL HEALTH LOCAL INITIATIVES ADVANCE

Working together with State Senator Ken LaValle, the State Budget includes \$500,000 for Lyme Disease and tick borne illness prevention and treatment. This will make funds available locally for pilot programs for tick control in places like Shelter Island and the Village of North Haven. The Legislature also approved important legislation to protect doctors who prescribe long-term antibiotic therapy for Lyme Disease from State disciplinary action.

The State Budget also included \$150,000 to implement a new program to improve mental health crisis response on the South Fork. Partnering with the East Hampton School District, Southampton Hospital, and Family Service League, this funding will help to initiate a quick response program for our youth who are in crisis.



American Heart Association's Hands-Only CPR Rally

Assemblyman Thiele welcomed students from Pierson High School in Sag Harbor to his Albany office on Tuesday, June 3, 2014. The students traveled to Albany with health teacher, Sue Denis, to advocate for the CPR in Schools bill (A.9298) and to participate in the American Heart Association's Hands-Only CPR Rally in the Well of the Legislative Office Building. Thiele is a co-sponsor of A.9298 which would require the Commissioner of Education to make recommendations to the Board of Regents in regard to requiring high schools to train students in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs).



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Eelgrass Restoration Efforts in Shinnecock Bay

Assemblyman Thiele joins volunteers at the Stony Brook Southampton Campus to help aid in eelgrass restoration efforts in Shinnecock Bay. Eelgrass, an underwater rooted vascular plant, provides habitat to many of our local marine fish and shellfish. Eelgrass also has the ability to cleanse our waters by removing nitrogen and improving water quality.