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# Assemblyman **Fred W. Thiele, Jr.** **2015 Legislative Summary**

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*Dear Constituent:*

*Throughout New York unemployment rates have dropped. New Yorkers are paying lower income, business, corporate, and manufacturing tax rates than they have in years. New York is on the road to recovery and the State Legislature has taken much needed steps to ensure that we continue on this path of economic growth.*

*As your independent voice in Albany, I have been fighting for the people and needs of those in the 1<sup>st</sup> Assembly District. We have successfully extended the property tax cap, instituted a \$3.1 billion property tax rebate program, and brought millions of State dollars to my District in increased school aid and funding for water quality and road infrastructure projects.*

*As this year comes to a close, I would like to take the opportunity to share with you some of the successes of the past 2015 Legislative Session as well as some of the my major initiatives in the 1<sup>st</sup> Assembly District.*

*Sincerely,*

*Fred W. Thiele, Jr.*

## 2015 Session Wrap-up

The 2015 State Legislative Session began with the passage of the fifth consecutive on-time budget. The \$150.3 billion plan puts families first, restoring funding to schools and investing in economic development projects. I fought for tax relief for homeowners, invested in job-creation programs and secured more State aid for our local schools. Through the 2015 State Budget we were able to allocate:

- \$23 Billion for education, \$1.6 Billion more than 2014
- \$5 Million to initiate the first Long Island Nitrogen Management and Mitigation Plan
- \$1.6 Million for the Long Island Central Pine Barrens Planning Commission
- \$200,000 for the Peconic Estuary Program
- \$175,000 for the South Fork Behavioral Health Initiative

### **Other major accomplishments during the 2015 Session included:**

- Development of a \$3.1 billion property tax rebate program that will give homeowners much-needed property tax relief
- Approval of a four-year extension of the property tax cap, which has saved taxpayers over \$7 billion since it took effect
- Passage of new laws to combat sexual assault on college campuses
- Implementation of ethics reform for Legislators





Assemblyman Thiele joins Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) students, faculty and administration at the Groundbreaking of the new Eastern Campus Health and Wellness Center.

*Photo Credit: SCCC*

## Thiele Appointed Chair of Assembly Small Business Committee

This past Session, when our new Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie asked me to Chair the Assembly Small Business Committee, I enthusiastically welcomed the opportunity and challenge. While small businesses are vital to the prosperity and vibrancy of every single community across the State, there is no place like the East End. We are historically, culturally and economically tied to small generational family

businesses. Whether it be our hardware stores, commercial fishermen, farmers, delis or restaurants, we need to ensure that our small businesses can exist, expand, and remain profitable in an ever changing business climate. I hope to focus my future efforts as Chair on cutting small business taxes, removing onerous paperwork requirements, and expanding career and skills development training state-wide.



Dr. Chris Gobler of Stony Brook University (right) discusses the importance of shellfish in the Peconic Bay with Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie (center) at Stony Brook Southampton's new Marine Science Center.

## Speaker of Assembly Visits AD 1

On October 20, 2015, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie visited Assemblyman Thiele's District. Throughout the day, Speaker Heastie was able to meet with farmers and commercial fisherman, tour the Stony Brook Southampton campus, and learn about some of the major, unique issues facing the South Fork such as the cost of and conversion of farmland to non-active uses, the regulatory constraints and infrastructure needs of the fishing industry, the nitrogen and water quality issues of the Peconic Estuary, and the expanding healthcare system on the East End.

## Improving the Safety of East End Roads

I am pleased to report that this year, two large resurfacing projects, State Route 27 and State Route 24, were completed. Two new traffic lights and additional pedestrian safety measures along Route 24 in Flanders are expected to be installed and fully operational in 2016. At my urging, the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) has initiated a small repaving project on State Route 114, from Stephen Hands Path to State Route 27 in East Hampton. I am also working with the DOT on investigating several additional improvements to Route 114.

This year I was able to direct an additional \$250,000 in capital funding to the Town of Shelter Island to help with a backlog of road repaving projects.

You may have also noticed the installation of a new lighted crosswalk near the Hampton Library in Bridgehampton. Senator Ken LaValle and I were able to secure \$90,000 for the Town to install this device which will improve pedestrian and driver safety in the busy hamlet. We hope that this project will serve as a model for improved pedestrian safety throughout Long Island.



Assemblyman Thiele and Senator Ken LaValle check in on the status of the dredging of the South Ferry channel, linking Shelter Island to North Haven. Periodic maintenance of the ferry channel is necessary to ensure safe passage for travelers utilizing State Route 114. \$750,000 in State funding was used to support this project.

*Photo Credit: The Shelter Island Reporter*

## COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUND REVENUES TOP \$1 BILLION

Since 1999, the CPF has generated \$1.064 billion and has protected over 10,000 acres of land. And while 2014 was the largest year for CPF revenues in the history of the program, 2015 revenues are on track to exceed last year. Neither Senator Ken LaValle nor I, the original sponsors of State legislation creating the Peconic Bay Community Preservation Fund, could know how successful and important the Community Preservation Fund (CPF) would become here on the East End.

This year I proposed legislation to modify the CPF in two ways, subject to local voter approval. The first would be to extend the CPF another twenty years

through 2050 to ensure that additional funds are raised to help further protect lands and community character. The second change would add a new provision allowing a portion of the generated revenue to be used on water quality improvement projects. The East End, surrounded entirely by water, is a community whose history, economy, and character are dependent upon clean water for recreation, tourism, and shellfishing. Maintaining the ecological health of local bays is just as crucial to protecting the character of the East End as preserving open space has been. This bill is currently awaiting Governor Cuomo's approval.

# Utility Oversight and Need for a Consumer Advocate

There is no question that the 2013 LIPA Reform Act, which I voted against, has failed. We were promised oversight, accountability, and protections for Long Islanders. We have none, and in fact, matters have gotten worse- rates are going to continue to increase.

That is why I have sponsored several pieces of legislation that would (1) elect the LIPA Board of Trustees

(2) restore the oversight role of the State Comptroller and State Attorney General, (3) provide real regulatory authority to the State Public Service Commission over LIPA/PSEG-LI rates, and (4) create a new State Office of the Utility Consumer Advocate to protect New Yorkers from exorbitant rate increases and represent their interest in residential utility matters.



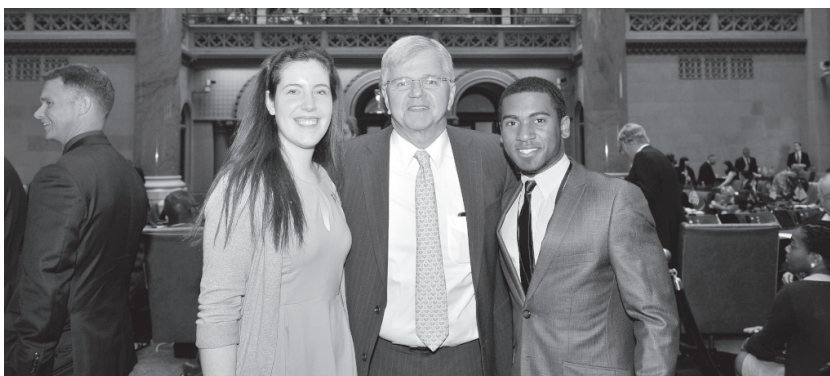
Assemblyman Thiele is joined by East Hampton Town Officials to announce their partnership to construct a new municipal parking field in downtown Montauk to help alleviate parking and pedestrian safety issues in the hamlet. Thiele secured \$250,000 in State capital funding to construct the field and subsequent infrastructure.



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Thiele, Jr.**

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The Assemblyman welcomed Sarah Pierson and William Reddick to the Assembly Chamber in Albany on Monday, May 18, 2015. These Southampton High School students were selected to attend the 15th Annual Students Inside Albany (SIA) Conference sponsored by the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation, Inc. The SIA Conference brings together students from across the State to learn about New York State Government and how citizen participation influences the public policy process.

## Thiele Secures Funding for William Floyd High School Library

Assemblyman Thiele has secured \$125,000 through the NYS State and Municipal Facilities Program to help support much needed improvements to the William Floyd High School Library. Thiele, previously Chair of the Assembly's Libraries and Education Technology Committee, has been a lifelong advocate of public school libraries.