



Assemblyman

Steve Otis



91st Assembly District

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

February 23, 2026

Dear Friends,

Please take care and follow instructions from your municipal government regarding road conditions and safety precautions following today's winter storm.

This newsletter includes updates on new state water grant funding awarded to Westchester communities, an update on the EMS reform process that has been one of my major priorities, and news on the state budget process that is a major focus of the early months of each year's legislative session.

We also cover Mamaroneck High School students lobbying in Albany and a recent legislative forum sponsored by the Federated Conservationists of Westchester County (FCWC).

Several families in Mamaroneck were displaced by a house fire last week. I include information about local efforts to support these families in crisis.

As always, do not hesitate to contact me or my staff on issues in this email or any matter with which we can be helpful. My office number is 914-939-7028.

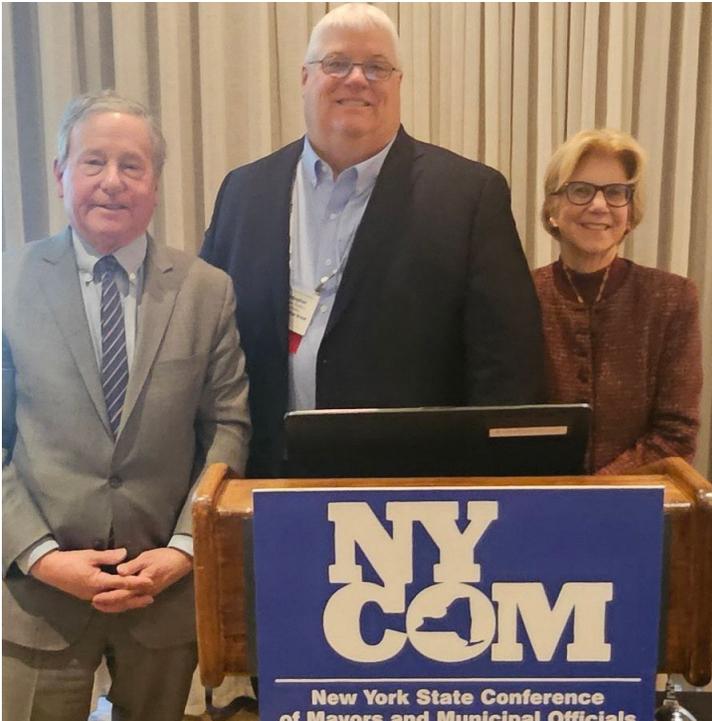
Warm Regards,

EMS Legislation Signed – Now the Work Begins

In December Governor Hochul signed the EMS Reform Legislation I sponsored with Senator Shelley Mayer. The bill requires EMS plans by county through a locally driven process that involves counties, villages, towns, and cities (A8086-A). The bill was approved as part of an agreement with the governor on some positive modifications to the planning process in the bill.

Our approach is to understand that throughout New York State, EMS is provided through a variety of organizational structures including municipal, intermunicipal, not-for-profit or for-profit contract coverage, and special districts. Our belief is that

the best way to grow EMS service is to have local officials choose the structure that they believe will best address their needs.



Assemblyman Otis at the NYCOM conference with fellow EMS panelists Village of Rye Brook Administrator Chris Bradbury and Senator Mayer

To assist in that process, Senator Mayer and I have participated in workshops on EMS reform at the conferences of the major groups representing New York State's local governments. Three weeks ago, we spoke on a panel with Rye Brook Village Administrator Chris Bradbury, a statewide advocate for EMS reform at the New York Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials (NYCOM) legislative conference, and last week we spoke at the annual conference of the NY Association of Towns (NYAOT).

Both meetings brought in-depth discussions with local officials from around the state about their hopes for the planning process and the need for EMS reform.

In March, Senator Mayer and I will be speaking on EMS at the conference of the New York State Association of Counties. Our goal is to continue to assist with the reform process and to use the information gathered included in the county plans to push for additional changes in state law as recommended by local officials.



Assemblyman Otis at the Association of Towns conference with Senator Mayer and NYAOT Executive Director Chris Koetzle.

\$265 Million in Water Quality and Climate Resiliency Grants Announced Statewide with 12 Awards to Westchester Projects



Left to right: Village of Port Chester Manager Stuart Rabin, Port Chester Deputy Mayor Phil Dorazio, Senator Shelley Mayer, County Executive Ken Jenkins, Assemblyman Otis, NYS DEC Regional Director Kelly Turturro, NYS DEC Commissioner Amanda Lefton.

On January 15th Governor Kathy Hochul announced the awarding of over \$265 million in grants to support projects that will help protect drinking water, improve climate resilience, update aging water infrastructure, reduce contributors to harmful algal blooms, and secure access to clean water.

To mark the announcement on that day, we were honored to have NYS DEC Commissioner Amanda Lefton in Westchester for the press conference announcing the statewide grants and highlighting the selection of 12 Westchester projects, including six projects benefiting Sound Shore watershed and communities I represent.

In her statewide announcement, Governor Hochul said, “Every New Yorker deserves clean water, which has been a top priority of mine since taking office. These grants continue our critical investments to update aging water infrastructure across the state. They will also help our local governments enhance resiliency against flooding caused by severe weather, again demonstrating our commitment to a safe, affordable, and sustainable future for all New Yorkers.”

The Sound Shore projects selected were:

Village of Mamaroneck – three projects totaling **\$9,976,250** in grant funding.

- Mamaroneck River Bridge Removal and Streambank Stabilization
- Confluence with Sheldrake River Channel Realignment
- Sheldrake River Pedestrian Bridge Removal and Floodplain Expansion

Village of Port Chester Sanitary Sewer Overflow Reduction--Phase 3 – **\$10 million**

The Village of Port Chester will replace an undersized 18- inch sewer pipe on Boston Post Road that causes sewage discharges during storm events with a new [36-inch] pipe. The new pipe will increase flow capacity, reduce sanitary sewer overflows, and improve water quality of the Byram River.

Rye Nature Center – Blind Brook Marine Habitat Restoration - **\$723,631.00**

Friends of Rye Nature Center will stabilize streambanks and restore wetlands along 1,660 feet of Blind Brook and an adjoining eight-acre wetland. The project will reduce streambank erosion and improve wetland habitat within the Long Island Sound watershed.

Town/ Village of Harrison – **\$7,385,494**

Brentwood Brook Culvert Replacements and Channel Widening

Each year since 2015 I have sponsored a state clean water grant workshop to encourage Westchester municipalities to apply for clean water and other environmental grant funding to help finance needed projects and lower the cost of

these projects to local governments. The announcement of 12 Westchester projects in this announcement is more good news for Westchester taxpayers.

We were thrilled Commissioner Lefton returned to Westchester to announce the statewide awards. At the event she was able to talk to some of the Westchester grant recipients.

In the Governor's statewide press release, Commissioner Lefton said, "Since taking office, and most recently in the 2026 State of the State, Governor Hochul continues to provide unprecedented resources to invest in climate resiliency and water infrastructure to support communities across the State. With more than \$265 million from multiple programs, including \$185 million supporting improvements in environmental justice communities, the awarded projects will help our municipal partners achieve meaningful reductions in flood risk, protect drinking water, improve aquatic habitat, and safeguard residents from increasingly severe weather events."

We were joined at the press conference by other state legislators, including my partner on Sound Shore grants, Senator Shelley Mayer, Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins, and local officials.

We have great support in Westchester from Governor Hochul, DEC Commissioner Lefton, and NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation President Maureen Coleman.

You can read the Governor's [press release here](#).

State Budget Hearings

Our state budget process is in full swing, and I remain an active participant on the Senate Assembly Joint Budget Hearings as part of the annual budget process. As a member of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, I attend the full schedule of hearings, which provide an excellent opportunity to hear from agency heads and outside advocates commenting on the proposed budget, policies and programs at different agencies and learn how departments respond to questions about programs they operate.

In this eblast, I include two excerpts from my discussion with agency heads on clean water programming in the budget and my support for expanding problem-solving courts that help divert offenders to a positive path outside the criminal justice system.



State Budget Hearing: Otis discusses clean water funding issues in the budget with DEC Commissioner Amanda Lefton.

[DEC Commissioner Amanda Lefton on Clean Water](#)



State Budget Hearing: Otis asks NYS Chief Administrative Judge Joseph Zayas about growing problem-solving courts across the state.

[Hon. Joseph Zayas, Chief Administrative Judge](#)

Annual Westchester Assembly Delegation Budget Fom



On January 30th, the Assembly Westchester Delegation hosted our annual budget forum, providing opportunity for Westchester non-profits, municipal leaders, and concerned citizens to provide feedback and share concerns related to this year's proposed Executive Budget. We heard from over 40 individuals covering a diverse set of topics, including education, infrastructure, libraries, social services, environmental groups, and labor.

Hearing directly from Westchester organizations and residents is an important contribution to our advocacy within the budget process. We need to know what the impacts are on Westchester groups as we work to modify the budget over the next few weeks.

Since joining the Assembly, my staff and I have played a leading role in organizing the Assembly Westchester budget forum. The Senate delegation holds similar events. You can view the Assembly budget forum in its entirety [here](#).

Original Civic Research in Action (OCRA) at Mamaroneck HS



I was excited to join students at Mamaroneck High School who are part of the “Original Civic Research in Action” (OCRA) course led by teacher Joe Liberti, ahead of their planned lobbying day in Albany. Through the OCRA Youth Voter Initiative, students are advocating for legislation that would allow 17-year-olds who will turn 18 by the time of the general election to vote in New York State primary elections, expanding early civic participation. I am a co-sponsor of that bill in the Assembly.

In preparation for an Advocacy Day in Albany, the students organized advocacy training to help peers understand the legislative process, refine their messages, and prepare to meet directly with lawmakers. I enjoyed providing introductory comments at the session and shared that I began my work in state government as a graduate student as part of the NYS Senate Fellows program, and I encouraged the students to follow their dreams in whatever field ultimately excites them.

A few weeks later, I met the students in Albany where I joined them on the Assembly floor during a substantive debate on legislation and heard about their day promoting their legislation.

Many High Schools have teachers offering non-traditional courses that excite students and enrich their educational experience. Mamaroneck High School is fortunate to have Mr. Liberti and his OCRA program, which has delivered engaging civic projects to Mamaroneck High School students for many years.

Federated Conservationists of Westchester County – State Legislative Roundtable



Assemblyman Otis speaking at the FCWC Legislative Roundtable, flanked by Assembly colleagues Mary Jane Shimsky, Chris Burdick, Senator Pete Harckham, and Assemblymember Dana Levenberg.

Two weeks ago, I was a panelist at the annual FCWC State Legislative Roundtable where Westchester Senate and Assembly Delegation members discussed pending environmental issues before the Legislature with environmental advocates from across the county.

Topics included the pending reduced packaging legislation, clean water issues, solid waste policies, and the importance of local environmental groups. We were also joined by students who asked questions as well.

Two issues before the legislature in the budget are proposals by Governor Hochul to increase water infrastructure funding by \$250 million connected to building of housing and her proposal to modify the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) to support new housing projects. The audience and the legislators were eager to hear more details about the specifics of the governor's proposals.

Westchester County communities are the home of countless local and county-wide environmental groups. They were well represented at the FCWC event, which was also attended by several current and former local officials. The event was held at Pace Law School in White Plains.

Several people, including children, rescued from raging house fire in Mamaroneck

By Eyewitness News
Monday, February 16, 2026 11:35PM



Support for Mamaroneck Families Affected by House Fire

Members of the Hommocks Middle School were affected by a house fire last week that left multiple people, including children, displaced. Thankfully everyone was safe after the fire. The community has put together a GoFundMe effort to support these families as they look for new housing. If you would like to learn more or contribute, please contact my office.