



This week, the legislative session continues in Albany. This past week I introduced the New York Gas Transition and Affordable Energy Act with State Senators Liz Krueger and Rachel May to require a transition off of our fossil fuel infrastructure in heating and cooling our building stock, which you can read more about below.

As always, read on for community updates from around the 109th District and stay safe!

LEGISLATIVE NEWS AND PRESS

- **Krueger, May, Fahy Introduce NY Gas Transition & Affordably Energy Act.** [X](#) [📺](#) [I've introduced the NY Gas Transition and Affordable Energy Act with State Senator Liz Krueger and NYS Senator Rachel May to ensure that NY's #CLCPA goals remain at the forefront of future energy planning and require a transition off of our fossil fuel-powered infrastructure.](#) New York State's heating, hot water, and cooking in our largely fossil fuel-powered building stock accounts for an astounding one-third of our state's greenhouse gas emissions every year, which roughly matches that of the transportation sector. Together, these two sectors account for two-thirds of New York's overall emissions, providing a clear blueprint for where New York can begin to significantly reduce emissions. By developing a statewide gas service transition plan aligned with the state's climate and emission reduction targets, and ending ratepayer subsidization of fossil fuel infrastructure, we are more likely to meet these aggressive—and vital—goals in the years to come.
- **Statement on School Mask Mandates.** [📄](#) Here is my statement with colleague Assemblymember John McDonald on how we move forward with New York's school mask mandate:

Joint Statement from Assemblymembers Fahy and McDonald on Ending School Mask Mandate

ALBANY, N.Y. (Feb. 10) — “With the ending of New York’s indoor mask mandate for most businesses and public places, our focus now turns to our students, educators and the school community. As New York State’s positivity rate, hospitalizations, and overall COVID-19 case count continues to drop, it’s reassuring to know we are in a dramatically better position than we were at the height of the Omicron wave just last month.

Learning environments in our public schools must be safe and engaging spaces for students, educators, staff, and parents alike. We need science-based public health metrics including infection, transmission, and hospitalization rates, voluntary vaccinations, indoor air quality, and more to help drive our decision-making around continued school mask mandates.

Given the positive position New York now finds itself in when it comes to our COVID-19 statistics, let’s establish clear metrics and guidelines for ending the mask mandate in our schools. Studies have indicated that masks, which have been effective at preventing in-school transmission, can negatively impact young students’ experiences, mental well-being, and at times, their ability to learn.

As we continue to stay vigilant against future waves and surges, we urge a timeline for ending of the statewide school mask requirement, while maintaining a metric-based system that school districts, in consultation with the Department of Health, are able to follow with some predictability. Balancing school safety and public health while getting back to some semblance of normalcy is not easy — but it is doable.

Please note, even as indoor mask mandates are lifted, wearing one will continue to be a decision that many of us make to protect our loved ones, including those of us who have immunocompromised family members. We urge all to continue to show respect for others and their health.”

###

Joint Budget Hearings Underway—Higher Education This Past Week. 🙌 [Budget hearings look a bit different these days—but here advocating for our students, faculty, and additional SUNY flagship](#) designations during this past week’s Joint Budget Hearing in Higher Education!



- **NY Lawmakers Introduce 'Cannabis Container Bill of Rights'.** 🌿 [As New York State rolls out the regulatory framework for our new #cannabis industry, we have an opportunity to address the industry's plastic waste crisis.](#) Senator Michelle Hinchey and I have introduced a bill to create a Cannabis Container Bill of Rights. More on this proposal at the link in this section.
- **Home Care Workers Need Fair Pay This Year.** 🏠 [Home care workers are essential workers—and this year's state budget must reflect the reality that low wages are driving many workers out of the sector.](#) If we're going to strengthen our home care workforce, then we must pass #FairPay4HomeCare. #HomeCareIsHealthCare
- **Hydrogen Fuel Cell Factory Coming to Bethlehem, New Scotland.** ✅ [By creating ~600 green energy jobs initially and growing to ~1,600 over the next few years, Plug Power Inc.'s new hydrogen fuel cell factory is helping to build the green economy of the future right here in the Capital Region.](#) I'm pleased to see this project come to fruition and I commend Bethlehem Town Supervisor David VanLuven, and Town of New Scotland, NY Supervisor Doug LaGrange for their partnership and hard work. #NYLeads. AND employees will have universal access to CDTA options to facilitate multi-modal and alternative methods of transportation. This is how we build stronger, more walkable, and more equitable communities. 🚌
- **In Our Own Voices Receives State Grant for Physical Renovations.** 🇮🇳🇵🇷🇬🇪 [We all know the incredible work that In Our Own Voices does in our area to support our LGBTQIA+ communities of color and more when it's needed most.](#) It was a pleasure to be able to give back, recognize their work, and secure this funding alongside my Capital Region delegation colleagues. More from WAMC Northeast Public Radio at the link in this section.

- **Sgt. James Taylor Honored at Albany County Honor-A-Vet Ceremony.** [This past week was special; we honored Sergeant James Taylor with family members, an #Albany native, for his decorated service to our nation in the Vietnam War.](#) After serving for 6 years on the frontlines, he returned home to found his own business. We will never forget his life and service.
- **Black History Month in the 109th District and Capital Region.** Black History Month is a time to pause and reflect upon the massive contributions of black Americans to our shared history and culture. This month we're highlighting prominent black Americans and trailblazers who called the Capital Region home at some point during their lives. To view each of these highlights, please click on the corresponding names below to learn more:

[Stephen and Harriet Myers](#)

[Thomas Elkins](#)

[Sgt. Henry Johnson](#)

[Solomon Northup](#)

ICYMI: IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

- **ICYMI: Albany Business Review: Fahy & Purnomo Op-Ed on Alcohol-To-Go.** 🍷 [Proud to pen this Albany Business Review op-ed with Dominick Purnomo, owner of dp An American Brasserie and Yono's, on permanently allowing 'alcohol-to-go'](#)—a vital financial lifeline for New York's restaurant industry. Up to 8,000+ restaurants in NY have closed their doors since March 2020—far too many.

[Additionally, 📌 from the Times Union editorial board: "In other words, takeaway alcohol will be heavily regulated, which should help allay potential fears over its impacts. And New Yorkers, it should be noted, don't seem especially wary: At least two polls found that majorities supported the idea. Takeaway alcohol sales are an idea whose time has come. Lawmakers should give a toast to Ms. Hochul's proposal."](#) Proud to carry the bill to do this—let's get it done this year in the budget, Governor Kathy Hochul! Our small and locally-owned restaurants need this vital financial lifeline.

- **ICYMI: Letter Sent Urging Including SUNY Albany and Binghamton University as Flagship Institutions.** 🎓 [The Governor has proposed only two new 'flagship' locations for SUNY.](#) That's why Senator Neil D. Breslin, Assemblymember John McDonald, and I have penned a letter urging that University at Albany, SUNY and Binghamton University be included as new SUNY 'Flagship' institutions in the final budget.

Read more from the [Times Union here.](#)

COMMUNITY EVENTS + RESOURCES

UPDATE: NY Homeowners Assistance Fund (HAF) Applications Close February 18th. 🏠 [The New York Homeowner Assistance Fund's \(HAF\) application window closes February 18th.](#) If you need financial assistance as a result of #COVID19 impacts to remain in your home, apply as soon

as possible: www.nyhomeownerfund.org



**At risk of losing your home due to COVID-19?
Apply now to the NYS Homeowner Assistance Fund
to receive support.**


Apply Now

**New York State
Homeowner Assistance Fund**

**Please note: application
window closes February 18th.**

 **ASSEMBLYMEMBER
PATRICIA A. FAHY**
109th Assembly District
Albany, Bethlehem,
Guilderland, New Scotland

 **NEW
YORK
STATE**
Homes and
Community Renewal

Need Help Paying Your Water or Wastewater Bills?  [Do you need help with paying your drinking water bills/wastewater service bills? New York's #LIHWAP may be able to help. Apply here and see if you're eligible: \[www.otda.ny.gov/programs/water-assistance\]\(http://www.otda.ny.gov/programs/water-assistance\)](#)



The **Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)** helps income-eligible households pay past due bills for drinking water and wastewater services.

The maximum benefit is **\$2,500** per provider or **\$5,000** if drinking water and wastewater services are combined.

 **ASSEMBLYMEMBER
PATRICIA A. FAHY**
109th Assembly District
Albany, Bethlehem,
Guilderland, New Scotland

New Yorkers Can File Their Taxes for Free!  [Did you know that most New Yorkers can file their taxes for free through the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance?](#)
Learn more: www.tax.ny.gov/pit/efile/



- **New Affordable Connectivity Program Can Help With Monthly Internet Costs.** 🖥️ Did you know the new Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) can help you pay up to \$30 of your monthly internet service bill? Check it out and see if you might qualify for the benefit: acpbenefit.org
- **ERAP Reopens.** 🏠 New York State's ERAP program has reopened although additional funds have not been secured for the program, however applying will protect you from eviction until your application is processed. Learn more: otda.ny.gov/ERAP
- **'Piece Together' Art Exhibit at Pine Hills Library.** [Make sure to stop by the Albany Public Library's 'Pieced Together'](#) art exhibit at the Pine Hills branch, a collection of artwork that transforms cut and discarded paper into new creations!
- **Important SNAP Program Changes.** 🗳️ [New changes to NY's #SNAP program include providing a new one-page application form](#), allowing older NYers to recertify their benefits for 36 months instead of 24 months, and eliminating the interview requirement for recertification. Learn more and apply for SNAP [here](#).
- **All New Yorkers 12+ Now Able to Receive COVID-19 Booster Shot.** 📍 [All New Yorkers aged 12+ are now eligible to receive their #COVID19 booster shot.](#) Capital Region — get yours today at Crossgates Mall in the old Lord & Taylor store or find a community clinic here: www.bit.ly/albanycountyclinics

Applying for Heating Assistance (HEAP) This Winter. 🏠 The winter months are approaching fast, so make sure you take advantage of New York's Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) application window and see if you're eligible for financial help with heating costs. Apply [here now](#).

HEAP can help you stay warm this winter!

New Yorkers can now apply for the regular HEAP benefit and the emergency benefit application opens on **Jan. 3, 2022.**



The Clean and Tune Benefit can also provide eligible households with up to \$400 to clean or repair primary heating equipment.

New York Small Business Recovery Grant Program Reminder. 📣 [New York's small business recovery grant program is open for applications to help cover COVID-19 pandemic-related expenditures.](https://www.nysmallbusinessrecovery.com) For more information and to apply, visit: www.nysmallbusinessrecovery.com

COVID-19 Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant Program

APPLY HERE: nysmallbusinessrecovery.com

ELIGIBILITY: Small businesses and small not-for-profit arts and cultural organizations are eligible to apply for pandemic-related expenditures from the last year.

FUNDS CAN HELP BY: Grants could be used to cover various business costs incurred between March 1, 2020 and April 1, 2021, including payroll, rent, mortgage, property and school taxes, insurance, utilities and pandemic-related expenditures that were necessary to protect the health and safety of workers and consumers.

Apply Now



NEW YORK
State of New York
Empire State
Development



If you need assistance, please contact my office at:
kuleszam@nyassembly.gov
OR (518) 455-4178.

PODCAST: The Fahy Files: What Makes the NY Capital Work (Or Not!) -- Connecting in a Time of Chaos

- To highlight some of the individuals in the Capital Region who exemplify what it means to remain connected within our community and cope with the chaos of the past year, I've launched a new series of my podcast *The Fahy Files*, 'Connecting in a Time of Chaos'.

Listen to our **first 6** (3 of these are featured below) **episodes** from this year so far on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [SoundCloud](#), or wherever you listen to your podcasts!

[If you know someone who might be interested in signing up for our weekly e-newsletter, forward them this e-mail or click and copy and paste the link found here.](#)

For more on my work in the state legislature, please visit my official [Assembly website](#), [Facebook page](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), or [Medium](#) to stay updated in 2021 and beyond! As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to my office with any questions or concerns during this time at fahyp@nyassembly.gov or **(518) 455-4178**.

Sincerely,



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