



Dear Neighbors,

As we go into a long holiday weekend, I hope you all are able to take some time to relax with loved ones and most especially, stay safe while traveling. This July 4th feels particularly poignant after a long week last week of SCOTUS decisions that will have many ripples through the shape of our democracy for years and decades to come. Much to unpack and discuss for us all and yet important to balance with community and family and a day of rest. I wish everyone a balanced day of both reflection and celebration.

I know many of you were affected by power outages last week, with NYSEG reporting nearly 4,000 customers without power last weekend. The community resources section of this newsletter contains helpful resources and tips on staying cool and safe during these outages, which are becoming more prevalent. I hope everyone finds them as useful as I did. A heartfelt thank you to the Tompkins County Department of Health for putting these recommendations and tips together.

STATEMENT ON RACIST MESSAGES

Recently, the ICSD School Board President and school district Superintendent received racist voice messages and death threats, which was covered in this Ithaca Voice article with in-depth background covered in both this [Ithaca Journal article](#) and this [Ithaca Times article](#). I stand unequivocally with Ithaca City School District Board President Sean Eversley Bradwell and Superintendent Luvelle Brown, and I will do my part to fight for a safer society. It is a great injustice in our country that many people of color still feel unsafe to hold positions of leadership or run for and hold public office, whether it be school board, local, state, or federal government. Threats, attacks, intimidation, and slander have systematically contributed to a government that is not fully representative of the people and has ensured a systemic exclusion from the very institution of our country. For anyone who wants to take action, there are steps we can all take, including getting involved with groups working for racial justice, such as Village at Ithaca, The [Tompkins County Human Rights Commission](#), [White Allies Against Systemic Racism \(WAASR\)](#), and [Showing Up for Racial Justice \(SURJ\)](#) or attending an educational program like these [Diversity and Inclusion Certificate Programs](#). We can attend board meetings, raise questions about how diversity and inclusion is being integrated into our institutions, voice our support and celebrate the work and accomplishments of staff of color. Together, we can hold ourselves

accountable to make the change we want to see. **Read my full statement here.**

Public Hearing

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON SCHOOL AID FORMULA

The 2024-25 Enacted New York State Budget includes a provision directing the Rockefeller Institute of Government to conduct a study and offer recommendations informed by public input to modify the State's Foundation Aid formula. Foundation aid was established as part of school aid in response to a court decision in 2006, which held the state had failed to ensure every student was receiving a “sound basic education” due to the large discrepancy between the lowest and the highest income school districts. It provides funding based on a formula that includes, for example, district-specific cost of living, cost to educate a student, funding capacity, and differing levels of student need. The current formula is also based on 2000 census data. Overall, the formula is out of date, and this year’s

enacted budget included funding for a study to inform recommendations for updating the formula, to be completed by December. As part of this study, the Institute is conducting hearings and collecting feedback from the public. The sites closest to our district where hearings will be held include one in Buffalo, NY at the North Park Community School on July 25th and one in Laurens, NY at the Laurens Central School on August 8th. You can find more information on the Foundation Aid study [here](#). This link provides forms to submit written comments or to sign up for a public comment during the hearings. For more context and background, [here is a link](#) that gives an overview of the state school financial system.



Around the District

Dryden Fiber awarded \$9 Million

I was deeply honored to attend Monday's announcement that Dryden Fiber - a community-based broadband provider operated by the Town of Dryden - was awarded a \$9 million grant from the NYS ConnectALL Office. The funding came through the Municipal Infrastructure Program, created in President Biden's American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. As the first municipal broadband service in the state, Dryden Fiber serves as an example of an affordable high-quality community service that successfully reaches the areas currently most unserved and underserved. This funding will bring expanded internet service to thousands of households across the towns of Dryden and Caroline, providing access to a service that has become integral to people's lives for work, education, healthcare and maintaining connection with the community. This remarkable achievement will enable Dryden Fiber, which began servicing customers in November 2022, to construct over 125 miles of fiber optic

line to reach over 2,650 new properties. Congratulations, Dryden!



Ithaca Carshare celebrates its 16th birthday

on June 25th Ithaca Carshare celebrated its 16th birthday and reopening! Ithaca Carshare, a program of the nonprofit Center for Community Transportation, provides access to shared vehicles, allowing members to reduce both their transportation costs and the associated emissions. This birthday celebration was especially

meaningful because Carshare closed temporarily from mid-2023 through early 2024 due to state insurance constraints on carshare operators. After our long and vigorous collaborative efforts last fall to ensure the passage of A5718b/S5959b, nonprofit organizations with transportation as a core mission, like Ithaca Carshare, can access affordable automobile liability insurance in New York State. Due to this new law, Carshare was able to reopen in early 2024 to continue as a leader in providing affordable, convenient, and environmentally responsible transportation through shared vehicles. Thank you, Ithaca Carshare, for providing affordable transportation to Ithaca area community members and helping us reduce our collective carbon footprint one shared ride at a time!



Food Bank Community Advocates Graduate

The 2024 Community Advocates Training Program - a program of the Food Bank of the Southern Tier - held its graduation at the Tompkins County Public Library this past Wednesday. This program empowers individuals who have experienced financial hardship and food insecurity to educate the larger community and raise awareness to help end hunger through sharing their personal stories with elected officials and the general

public. The Food Bank of the Southern Tier is a nonprofit organization devoted to fostering hunger-free communities in Tompkins County and five other counties of the Southern Tier. To learn more about the advocacy work of the Foodbank of the Southern Tier, click on their Web site. To apply to become an advocate click on their Web site. Congratulations and thank you to these advocates for helping to address food insecurity in our communities!



Anna in the News

Capital Tonight interview on LGBTQ+ Legislation

Earlier this week I was interviewed by Capital Tonight about [A1273/S5532](#), a bill I sponsor that establishes a permanent state LGBTQ+ advisory board which can generate recommendations for addressing socioeconomic, healthcare, housing, employment and other LGBTQ+ specific disparities. This advisory board will help gather information on issues of concern to the LGBTQ+ community and generate research-based recommendations to the Governor on policies to address these disparities. Among the most marginalized members of the LGBTQ+ community, are transgender and gender non-binary (TGNB) individuals, especially those of color. Work is particularly needed to address the unequal treatment of TGNB individuals, as they face especially high rates of unemployment, underemployment, food insecurity, trauma and unstable housing. This work has

begun with the 2023 TGNCNB Employment Report recently published. My legislation provides a permanent and ongoing vehicle to ensure the needs of these and other members of the LGBTQ+ community continue to be heard and communicated to state policy makers. The bill passed both houses of the legislature, and now awaits the Governor's signature. You can watch the full interview here.

Fashion Act Presented at Sustainable Apparel and Textiles Conference

I gave audience members an overview of the Fashion Act, A4333c/S4746b during a Sustainable Apparel and Textile Conference in New York City, last week. It is imperative we cut down on waste and pollution stemming from the fashion industry, and the US has a critical role to play here as the second largest consumer of so-called "fast fashion" garments, made cheaply and worn little before being disposed of (at 17 billion units/year). This is especially important for New York State, whose landfills have only about 16 years before they reach capacity, and where we hold ambitious greenhouse gas emissions reductions goals under the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. I had the honor of speaking to a room of over 200 people in the industry, from brand and industry representatives to sustainability directors, about my bill, A4333c. This bill outlines a step-by-step plan to

reduce the carbon footprint of the fashion industry by requiring companies selling clothing in New York State to know and disclose all of the producers in their supply chains, and to be responsible for environmental impacts in those supply chains. It requires companies to set and achieve science-based targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the pace required to keep global warming below 1.5 C from pre-industrial levels, as set forth in the Paris Agreement. The Fashion Act will also require brands to work with their textile suppliers to assure their handling of chemicals meets accepted world standards for minimizing toxic impacts. The New York Department of State would develop regulations to guide companies in complying with the law, which would be enforced by the Attorney General. Companies would be fined if found to be out of compliance and still failing to comply within a grace period. I will be continuing to work on moving this legislation in the next legislative session. To learn more on the Fashion Act click [here](#).



Community Resources

Power outages

Because of the power outages that have been sweeping through our area amidst an increasing prevalence of extreme weather events, the Tompkins County Whole

Health Department has created guidance related to heat safety. Here is a full list of the department's recommendations.



Health Alert: Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) present in Cayuga Lake

Tompkins County Whole Health is urging residents and visitors to beware of Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs), which are a concentrated overgrowth of a particular blue green algae that creates a large concentration of dangerous cyanotoxins. These blooms are present in local waterways and can be harmful to people and pets if they enter the water. The water body with the greatest incidence of HABs in NYS is Cayuga Lake. The Department of Health is urging everyone to be cautious and on the lookout before they go into local waterways such as lakes, creeks and rivers. Before getting into the water, if you see what looks like the picture below, do not go in the water or let your children or pets go into the water. Check this [resource](#) for a list of where HABs have currently been reported. This [map](#) contains the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) listing of freshwater HABs. For more on Whole Health updates on HABs, visit their website [here](#).

Related to this, I note that despite a vigorous statewide monitoring system, the overall incidence of HABs in New York State appears to be increasing relatively unchecked. If you want to read more about the legislative action I'm taking on Harmful Algal Blooms, my bill, [A8867](#), would

create a statewide Harmful Algal Bloom prevention and mitigation data repository, to allow us to track not just the incidence of HABs, but potential causes and results of attempted interventions. It would also establish a grant program to provide funding to support municipalities or intermunicipal organizations in using best practices for local HABS monitoring and prevention. This would give a more complete statewide picture and allow much-needed progress toward identifying and implementing effective solutions. I will be working hard to move this legislation in the next state legislative session.



Construction Continues in Downtown Cortland

As Cortland residents experience daily, the streets in the downtown core have been difficult to navigate and impact both motorists and businesses alike. To help us plan ahead and reduce negative impacts on our day, Crown City Rising provides regular detailed construction updates and more about the project, as well as posts about what makes Cortland such a desirable place to live. Here is a bit of a highlight of the ongoing projects. Utility vault repairs are ongoing at 8 Main Street, street lighting and fiber optics are being installed at the west side of Main Street between Orchard Street and West Court, and asphalt is being removed on the east side of Main Street from Clinton Avenue to Port Watson Street. Here's to the construction crews working tirelessly in the heat to get this project done, as well as the business owners who are keeping the heart of downtown Cortland alive and thriving!

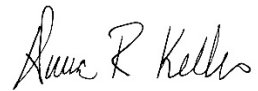


Agricultural Conservation Easements: Site Plan Workshop

This workshop is intended for people applying for state funding to protect their farmland. The New York Agricultural Land Trust will teach participants about creating a farm site plan for the state farmland protection implementation grant program. Pre-applications for the grant are due by Aug. 2 and a site plan is a key part of the application for this grant. The workshop will be Tuesday July 9 if the weather is rainy (for farmers who will need to work on a sunny day). If the weather is fair on July 9, the backup date for the program is July 23. It is a

zoom meeting. Sign up online to attend: Send questions to Crystal Buck, Farmland Protection & Agriculture Marketing Educator, at cb258@cornell.edu or call 607-272-2292 ext. 265.

In good health,



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