



# This Week in New York

**Covering New York State and City Government**

*A Publication of Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC*

*June 2, 2017 Edition*



## ***In the News – New York State***



### **New York Governor Cuomo, California Governor Brown, and Washington Governor Inslee form the United States Climate Alliance**

#### ***Cuomo, Brown and Inslee Will Serve as Co-Chairs, Urge Other States to Join Alliance***

In response to President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, California Governor Jerry Brown Jr., and Washington State Governor Jay Inslee this week announced the formation of the United States Climate Alliance. The coalition will convene U.S. states committed to upholding the Paris Climate Agreement and taking aggressive action on climate change.

“The White House's reckless decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement has devastating repercussions not only for the United States, but for our planet. This administration is abdicating its leadership and taking a backseat to other countries in the global fight against climate change,” said Governor Cuomo. “New York State is committed to meeting the standards set forth in the Paris Accord regardless of Washington's irresponsible actions. We will not ignore the science and reality of climate change which is why I am also signing an Executive Order confirming New York's leadership role in protecting our citizens, our environment, and our planet.”

According to the Governors, New York, California, and Washington, representing over one-fifth of U.S. Gross Domestic Product, are committed to achieving the U.S. goal of reducing emissions 26-28 percent from 2005 levels and meeting or exceeding the targets of the federal Clean Power Plan.

“The President has already said climate change is a hoax, which is the exact opposite of virtually all scientific and worldwide opinion,” said Governor Brown. “I don't believe fighting reality is a good strategy – not for America, not for anybody. If the President is going to be AWOL in this profoundly important human endeavor, then California and other states will step up.”

“I am proud to stand with other governors as we make sure that the inaction in D.C. is met by an equal force of action from the states,” said Governor Inslee. “...Announcement by the President leaves the full responsibility of climate action on states and cities throughout our nation. While the President’s actions are a shameful rebuke to the work needed to protect our planet for our children and grandchildren, states have been and will continue to step up.”

Collectively, New York, California, and Washington represent approximately 68 million people – nearly one-in-five Americans – and the states account for at least 10 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. California will continue to work closely together with other states to help fill the void left by the federal government.

With input from all participants, the U.S. Climate Alliance will also act as a forum to sustain and strengthen existing climate programs, promote the sharing of information and best practices, and implement new programs to reduce carbon emissions from all sectors of the economy.

Governor Cuomo signed Executive Order 166 affirming the state’s adherence to the Paris Climate agreement and directing all State agencies, authorities and commissions to develop a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2030, and 80 percent by 2050 by March 31, 2018. The plans should include no or low cost operational improvements, retro-commissioning, capital energy efficiency retrofits, and onsite renewable and high efficiency combined heat and power projects.

## Three Weeks Remain

### *What’s Left on Your Agenda?*

June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

## *In the News – New York City*

# **NYS to Invest \$151 Million to Strengthen Staten Island Coastal Resiliency**

New York State will invest \$151 million to build a multi-use elevated promenade to improve the resilience of Staten Island's east shore and enhance waterfront access for surrounding communities. The coastal resiliency project, a seven-mile long seawall stretching from Fort Wadsworth to Oakwood Beach, will protect communities from severe coastal flooding, while creating new wetland habitats and recreational amenities, including biking and walking pathways and easy access to public beaches.

"This innovative project takes into account the diverse needs of the affected communities, protecting against future devastating weather events, enhancing access to the shore, creating vibrant, thriving wetlands and bringing peace of mind to those living along the Staten Island coastline," Governor Cuomo said. "New York will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that vulnerable communities are equipped with resources to protect against extreme weather while incorporating community input and building for future growth."



Working in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers, the project will include a seawall to built up to 20 feet above sea level to protect against a storm at least the size of Sandy – the “300 year-level” storm. The multi-use promenade will support a range of recreational activities, including outdoor concerts, beer and food tastings, cultural festivals, nature walks, seaside carnivals, bike races, marathons and other running competitions, environmental education, and other events and community gatherings.

To ensure that the project meets the needs of the community, the Department of Environmental Conservation will hold a series of community-based design forums. The forums will allow interested members of the community to offer direct input into the final design of the seawall promenade and participate in the development of the project. New York will host a project website and keep the public closely informed through frequent updates.

Leveraging the state's previous investments in coastal resilience, the project also includes the construction of flood resilient wetlands in Oakwood Beach where the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery purchased more than 300 properties after Superstorm Sandy via a \$123 million voluntary buyout program.

A final design will be complete in the winter of 2018. Construction is slated to begin in 2019 and be completed in 2022.

## Bills Signed by the Mayor

**Introduction 282-A**, sponsored by Majority Leader James Van Bramer, relates to community involvement in decisions of the BSA.

**Introduction 418-A**, sponsored by Council Member Karen Koslowitz, relates to written responses by the BSA.

**Introduction 514-A**, sponsored by Council Member Steven Matteo, relates to the expiration of variances granted by the BSA.

**Introduction 518-A**, sponsored by Council Member Donovan Richards, requires secondhand automobile dealers to disclose whether automobiles have been recalled by the automobiles' manufacturers.

**Introduction 722-A**, sponsored by Council Member Jumaane Williams, increases the minimum apartment temperature that must be maintained by a landlord during nighttime hours.

**Introduction 823-A**, sponsored by Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, requires the city to issue a report regarding illegal conversions of dwelling units.

**Introduction 848**, sponsored by Council Member Ritchie Torres, sends voters their voter histories.

**Introduction 951**, sponsored by Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, requires all public phone lines be able to dial 911 directly.

**Introduction 1028-B**, sponsored by Council Member Laurie Cumbo, creates a Sexual Health Education Task Force.

**Introduction 1117-A**, sponsored by Majority Leader James Van Bramer, expands current delivery cyclist protections to all commercial cyclists.

**Introduction 1177-A**, sponsored by Council Member Helen Rosenthal, requires feasibility of interval crossing systems at high-crash intersections.

**Introduction 1200-A**, sponsored by Council Member Donovan Richards, relates to proof of service of certain required mailings for applications the BSA.

**Introduction 1218-A**, sponsored by Council Member Vincent Gentile, relates to illegal conversions.

**Introduction 1285-A**, sponsored by Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, requires a study on locations with significant pedestrian traffic.

**Introduction 1305-A**, sponsored by Council Member Rafael Salamanca, relates to notice parking restrictions related to removal of trees.

**Introduction 1346-A**, sponsored by Council Member Costa Constantinides, requires storm water management and control of discharges into storm sewers.

**Introduction 1384**, sponsored by Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, provides fast food employees the ability to make voluntary contributions to not-for-profit organizations of their choice through payroll deductions.

**Introduction 1387**, sponsored by Council Member Corey Johnson, prohibits on-call scheduling for retail employees.

**Introduction 1388**, sponsored by Council Member Corey Johnson, regulates consecutive work shifts in fast food restaurants involving both the closing and opening of the restaurant.

**Introduction 1390-A**, sponsored by Council Member Ben Kallos, requires Dept. of City Planning to designate a BSA coordinator.

**Introduction 1391-A**, sponsored by Council Member Ben Kallos, relates to appraisals regarding BSA applications.

**Introduction 1392-A**, sponsored by Council Member Ben Kallos, relates to applications for variances and special permits before the BSA.

**Introduction 1393-A**, sponsored by Council Member Ben Kallos, requires BSA to report on variances and special permits.

**Introduction 1394-A**, sponsored by Council Member Ben Kallos, relates to adding zoning variance and special permit information on a map on a city website.

**Introduction 1395**, sponsored by Council Member Brad Lander, requires fast food employers to offer work shifts to current employees before hiring additional employees.

**Introduction 1396**, sponsored by Council Member Brad Lander, establishes general provisions governing fair work practices and requiring certain fast food employers to provide advance notice of work schedules to employees and to provide a schedule change premium when hours are changed after required notices.

**Introduction 1456-A**, sponsored by Council Member Karen Koslowitz, requires mobile vendor letter grades.

**Introduction 1586**, sponsored by Council Member Ritchie Torres, relates to the preservation of certain hotels.

## *Briefs*

### **Audi First Company Approved For Self-Driving Vehicle**

Audi of America Inc. was selected as the first company to perform a demonstration of a self-driving vehicle in New York, Governor Andrew Cuomo's office announced this week.

The demonstration of the self-driving car will take place on June 13 in Albany near the state Capitol. Audi was approved by the State Police and the Department of Motor Vehicles.

"Autonomous vehicles are a major part of the future of the automotive industry and this pilot program will help ensure New York continues to be a hub of innovation and cutting edge technology," Governor Cuomo said. "This emerging technology has the potential to decrease accidents and save lives on our roadways, and with this approval we are one step closer to a safer and stronger New York for all."

The 2017-2018 State budget included a provision that allows for a 12-month pilot program for testing self-driving vehicles. The law requires the car is capable of hands-free driving, but a person must take over.

### **Comptroller Stringer Audit: Department of Finance Gave \$4 Million in Veterans' and School Tax Reductions to 1,500 Ineligible Property Owners**

The Department of Finance (DOF) improperly gave away over \$4 million in property tax reductions that are intended to benefit veterans and individual homeowners, a new audit from New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer shows. The audit report shows that DOF improperly granted or continued Veterans' Exemptions to over 1,500 ineligible property owners. In more than 1,000 of those cases, DOF failed to remove the tax breaks after the eligible veteran or family member moved or passed away, and the agency also allowed 60 corporations and LLC's to receive the exemptions inappropriately. In some cases, the eligible veterans had moved away in the 1960s, in other cases, the veteran had died in the early 2000s, yet DOF allowed the properties to continue receiving Veterans' Exemptions through at least July 1, 2016.

The Comptroller's audit analyzed records regarding property owners who have received Veterans' Exemptions over a six-year period beginning July 1, 2011 and calculated the losses from improperly-continued exemptions through June 30, 2017. In total, the Comptroller's Office identified over \$4 million lost to the City from tax reductions improperly given to ineligible property owners through Veterans' and School Tax exemptions.



## Plans to Bring More Direct, Reliable Service to Staten Island Express Bus Riders

New York State this week announced the results of a comprehensive two-year study of Staten Island Express Bus service and released a series of recommendations to improve reliability, reduce trip times, and simplify the network. The study found that the current system is outdated, leading to overcrowding, long waits and inconsistent travel times.

The average express bus makes 27 stops before ever leaving Staten Island. Meanwhile, 83 percent of riders use the busiest 50 percent of stops, and underused stops slow trips and complicate routes. The study also found that nearly all express bus riders go to one of two places – Lower Manhattan or Midtown, but outdated routes force buses to travel through congested areas in between and leave them spending up to half their time waiting in traffic on congested Manhattan streets. Additionally, the current system is so complex it's nearly impossible for commuters to determine which route serves them best.

Based on this study, the MTA proposed a set of recommendations to improve service:

- Divide the network into two routes going to either Lower Manhattan or Midtown to allow buses to bypass congested avenues and city streets and reduce travel time.
- Eliminate underused stops on Staten Island, which will allow most riders to continue using their same stop, but with a shorter, more direct route to and from work.
- Boost frequency of buses on a smaller number of routes to help mitigate overcrowding and provide shorter average wait times.
- Streamline routes on Staten Island, using highways instead of local roads

## Coming Up

### *New York State*

*Legislature is in session Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, June 8<sup>th</sup>*

#### *Tuesday June 6<sup>th</sup>*

*The future hiring practices of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.*

Senate Standing Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions, Hamilton Hearing Room B, Legislative Office Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Albany, 9:30 a.m.

#### *Wednesday June 7<sup>th</sup>*

*Services for Victims of Human Trafficking*

Joint Assembly and Senate Hearing, Roosevelt Hearing Room C, Legislative Office Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Albany, 11 a.m.

## *New York City*

### *Monday June 5<sup>th</sup>*

*Committee on Transportation*, Council Chamber – City Hall, 10 a.m.

*Committee on Land Use*, Council Chamber – City Hall, 11 a.m.

*Subcommittee on Mental Health, Developmental Disability, Alcoholism, Substance Abuse and Disability Service*, Committee Room, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor – 250 Broadway, 1 p.m.

### *Tuesday June 6<sup>th</sup>*

*Committee on Aging*, Council Chamber – City Hall, 10 a.m.

*Committee on Recovery and Resiliency*, Committee Room – City Hall, 1 p.m.

### *Thursday June 8<sup>th</sup>*

*City Council Stated Meeting*, Council Chambers – City Hall, 1:30 p.m.

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