



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

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SUSAN SERINO April 1, 2016

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SECURED UNPRECEDENTED FUNDING TO CLEAN UP ABANDONED STATE FACILITIES

ALBANY, NY—Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) announced today that she successfully secured language in the State Budget to facilitate the clean-up of local abandoned state facilities including the Hudson River Psychiatric Center—a move with the

potential to expedite a project which will ignite the local economy and create hundreds of jobs.

“Developing the Hudson River Psychiatric Center has tremendous potential to truly transform our local economy,” said Senator Serino. “However, before that potential can be fully realized, the abandoned site requires millions of dollars in clean-up caused by the need for asbestos abatement and lead removal. I have been fighting tirelessly for a state program that would move this process along so that our community can finally reap the benefits of its development. Today, I was successful in securing language which will provide up to \$8 million in tax credits to aid in the costs associated with asbestos remediation. This language in the State Budget brings us one giant step closer to making it’s turnaround a reality.”

The project, which has come to be known as ‘Hudson Heritage,’ aims to transform the abandoned psychiatric center into both commercial and residential properties. According to a 2015 report by the Poughkeepsie Journal, the project will require that nearly every building on the Hudson River Psychiatric Center site, save for the administration building which is slated to become an 80 room hotel, would need to be demolished in order for the project to get underway.

The article noted at the time, that the estimated cost of demolishing the property, which sits on over 150 acres of land in the Town of Poughkeepsie, totals nearly \$14 million. **However, that estimate has since grown and is currently estimated falls between \$16 and \$18 million. Nearly 50 percent of that cost is being attributed solely to the asbestos abatement needed to ensure that the property does not pose a health or safety risk to the community or the environment.**

Asbestos poses a significant public health risk in many older buildings across our state, and has significant and devastating long-term health effects including an increased risk of lung cancer, mesothelioma, as well as asbestosis. Having been a favorite site of looters for nearly a decade, much Hudson River Psych Center is filled with airborne asbestos making it especially hazardous. Currently, there are comprehensive processes that govern the abatement of toxic hazards associated with asbestos, however building owners are not

required to inspect for or to remove asbestos containing materials before the building is sold. Instead, the inspection and abatement procedures are triggered by demolitions or renovations, sticking the new owners with the bill.

“I do not think that people always realize how much has to go into rehabilitating these abandoned properties, but asbestos abatement alone can too often bankrupt a project and leave the local community in a lurch ” **Serino continued.** *“With over 400,000 square feet of commercial space and over 700 residential units planned for this project, we cannot afford to miss out on an opportunity that would not only bring new, sustainable jobs to the community, but could add significantly to the tax rolls in one of our hardest hit areas.”*

Nick Minoia, Founding Partner of Diversified Reality Advisors said, *“Right now, this abandoned property truly poses a threat to the health, safety and welfare of the surrounding community. It is a magnet for looters and crime, burdening the local police and fire personnel and giving nothing back to the community. What Senator Serino has accomplished in this year's budget will help to accelerate the process to ensure that this property is safely demolished, rehabilitated and transformed into something that the community can really rally around and be proud of.”*

Serino concluded, *“If we truly want our area to be ‘Open for Business,’ we need to get innovative when it comes to addressing the challenges facing the businesses that are here now and those looking to move here. Transforming abandoned state properties into workable businesses has significant potential to breathe new life into communities and reinvigorate local economies. This funding will open the door to significant economic development that’s good for the taxpayer and great for the community.”*