NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Senator Nozzolio Fights for Amendment to Reject Governor's Utiltiy Tax Increase

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Albany- State Senator Mike Nozzolio today led his colleagues in the Senate Republican Conference in fighting for an amendment to the State budget he authored and sponsored that would eliminate a dangerous surcharge costing homeowners and businesses over $500 million in increased gas and electric bills.

The increased tax on utility companies was proposed by Governor Paterson behind closed doors as part of his secretive budget negotiations with Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. Energy Industry officials predict that it will cost electric and gas consumers an additional $531 million in the coming year alone.

"The utility tax is a giant step backward for jobs and economic recovery in Upstate New York. At a time when homeowners, senior citizens, families and businesses can

least afford it, this tax alone will raise our bills at least another two to four percent," said Senator Nozzolio. "If we care about jobs and small businesses, we've got to enact this amendment and provide some relief for energy consumers in this budget."

The amendment proposed by the Senate Republicans also extends the State Power for Jobs program for an additional two years until June 2011. The Power for Jobs program provides low-cost power to businesses that make specific commitments regarding job retention and growth in New York.

"High energy costs are already the biggest impediment to job growth and economic recovery in Upstate New York. New York State has the second-highest energy costs in the continental U.S., making it difficult to compete with neighboring states like Pennsylvania and Ohio," said Senator Nozzolio. "While Senator Smith and his fellow Democrats talk about creating 'green jobs', their message falls flat unless they join us in our efforts to reduce the financial burden of energy costs and support the Power for Jobs program."