



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Statement From Senator Nozzolio on New Utility Bill Assessment Fee

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO July 20, 2009

As if our gas and electric bills weren't bad enough, the situation was just made worse.

All across the state, New Yorkers have just received an unwelcome notice in their monthly utility bills regarding a new State Assessment Fee. The notice cited a new law that took effect on July 1st, 2009, requiring utilities to collect a special assessment from all customers--- an assessment that will be sent directly to New York State and put into the State's general fund.

New York's energy users should not have been treated in this manner. New York's homeowners cannot afford another tax. New York's job producing businesses cannot remain competitive with another tax. Our entire economy will be hurt by the imposition of this new tax.

What is so incredibly frustrating is that this tax simply did not have to happen. Your hard earned tax dollars are being used to cover the deficit created by a State budget that increased spending by a record \$13 billion, a full ten percent, over last year's budget. This was a spending spree that should have not happened, especially in these difficult economic times.

During the budget negotiations, **I sponsored and fought for an amendment that would have removed the onerous new taxes on natural gas and utilities.** My amendment also restored funds that were swept from the New York Power Authority that would expand the Power for Jobs program to provide low cost power to businesses and not-for-profit corporations that create or retain jobs in New York. Unfortunately, in a totally partisan fashion, Senate Democrats voted unanimously to defeat the amendment, **which lost by only one vote.**

This amendment would have done away with one more unnecessary, burdensome tax and taken measures to keep energy costs down, providing relief particularly in Upstate and Western New York. Instead, the Senate Democrats advanced energy tax proposals in their

disastrous budget that will harm families, and prevent businesses from creating new jobs at a time when we need it most.

I was never so certain of doing the right thing when I cast my vote against this budget, which created the largest spending increase in state history, the largest tax increase in state history, and raised utility taxes to the highest in our nation.

Upstate residents and businesses are already feeling the pain caused by Governor Paterson's New York City-driven agenda of higher taxes and spending. This month, Parker Hannifin announced the closing of their plant in Wayne County and as a result, we will see the exodus of another 230 jobs from our region. The company cited New York State's unfavorable tax structure and unbearable utility costs as their main reasons for closing their doors.

Parker Hannifin is one of many job-producing businesses being driven out of our State. New York State's unemployment rates are nearly 9% and the policies that have been forced upon our taxpayers do nothing to create jobs or even retain the ones we still have.

Every single day I hear passionate and sincere pleas for help from the people in my district. Many have lost their jobs and are struggling to provide for their family's basic needs. They are cutting costs, and eliminating everything non-essential from their budgets. While New Yorkers tighten their belts everywhere, our State government has failed to do the same. In addition to this year's budget that increased spending by \$13 billion, New York State taxpayers were socked with over \$8.5 billion in new taxes and fees. If we do not act soon, New York will be the last state in America to emerge from the national recession.

I remain dedicated to doing everything I can to reverse the effects of this budget and return common sense to our state government. We must continue the fight to relieve the taxpayers of our state, who are already overburdened by New York's punitive tax structure. We must reduce state spending, restore the STAR property tax rebate program, and restore the Empire Zone program, a program that has kept many manufacturing businesses like Guardian Glass, Zoto's, Garlock, Ultra Life, Gould's Pumps and others here in New York State. We must refocus our efforts on ways to make New York State a better place to live, work, raise a family and enjoy retirement.

In response to the outrageous tax increase on energy, I am calling upon Governor Paterson and Senate President Malcolm Smith to repeal this onerous tax. I encourage you to join my efforts by signing my petition against the tax by clicking [here](#) or by logging on to my Facebook page.