



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

Senate Democrats Send a Message to the Region's Taxpayers: Drop Dead Hudson Valley

STEPHEN M. SALAND August 31, 2009

| ISSUE: **MTA (METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY)**

Senator Steve Saland (R,I, C – Poughkeepsie) expressed his outrage that once again the Senate Democrat Leadership is turning its back on the people of the Hudson Valley. It was announced last week that the Chairmen of the Senate Finance, Corporations and Transportation Committees, all Senators representing New York City, will be holding public hearings in New York City and Mineola (Long Island) to hear comments on the Governor's nomination of Jay Walder as the MTA Chief.

Senator Saland had requested by letter that the Chairmen consider a location in the Metro-North region to allow Hudson Valley residents an opportunity to hear whether this nominee had a plan to wean the fiscally troubled transit system from financial dependence on taxpayers.

"Once again, the Senate Democrat Leadership is treating the people of the Hudson Valley like the proverbial stepchild of the MTA," said Senator Saland. "To leave the northern counties out of the public hearing process, is a slap in the face to each of us paying these exorbitant fees and taxes. It is the Chairmen's responsibility to represent the entire MTA region on this issue, not just their own backyard," continued Saland.

Senator Saland, a vocal opponent of the MTA bail-out plan, had requested prior to the bail-out plan being adopted that the Senate Democrat Majority conduct a hearing in the Hudson Valley. “The Chairmen, however, held hearings only in Harlem and the Bronx and pushed through the financially crippling legislation that imposes taxes on each and every business, local government, school, library, hospital, college and not-for-profit organization, and compounded that pain with their increased motor vehicle fees on all Hudson Valley motorists who are not only dependent on their vehicles for transportation, but the vast majority of whom do not even use the system,” said Saland.

“Although the number of Dutchess County commuters is modest, if not minimal, with the payroll tax and motor vehicle fees imposed by the Democrats’ MTA bail-out, Dutchess County and its taxpayers could be paying in excess of \$85 million per year to the MTA. Dutchess County, at its peak, has an average morning ridership of 4,126, as compared to New York City transit ridership of 5,042,263 and New York City bus ridership of 2,356,301,” said Saland.

“For too long, the MTA has siphoned money from Dutchess County to support a poorly mismanaged transit system that has proven time and again to have wasteful spending habits that continue to dig a deeper fiscal hole. Dutchess residents and businesses want a Chairman who will put an end to MTA’s reliance on taxpayers in the Metro-North region. It is critical that Senate Democrats and the Governor recognize the Hudson Valley has a strong voice and will not support a candidate who does not recognize and address the system’s inherent unfairness, if not prejudice, to the Metro-North region, particularly to Dutchess County and the other so called ‘quarter pounders’ (Orange, Putnam and Rockland Counties),” said Senator Saland.

Saland, a senior Senator from the Hudson Valley, has made it abundantly clear that he will use his position on the Finance Committee to demand answers of the Governor’s nominee

on the painful and unfair tax burden shouldered by Dutchess County taxpayers and businesses. "I will not allow this nominee to be rubber stamped through the confirmation process without hearing from his lips precisely how he plans to release the taxpayers of Dutchess County from the bondage of serving as revenue hostage to the MTA," said Saland.

"There is no question that any MTA suburban senator who supported the bail-out betrayed their constituency," said Saland. "And for there not to be a hearing in the Metro-North region is basically Democrat leadership stating in a unified voice: 'Drop Dead Hudson Valley'," concluded Senator Saland.