



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Senator Suzi Oppenheimer Announces Interactive Cancer Mapping System for New York State

SUZI OPPENHEIMER May 25, 2010

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Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck) is pleased to announce that a new state website has been launched to map incidences and types of cancer alongside nearby environmental facilities. The website is the outgrowth of legislation championed by Senator Oppenheimer, which requires the NY State Department of Health and the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation to gather, monitor and map data for incidents of cancer throughout the state and to analyze whether there are environmental trends that should be investigated further by the medical community.

“The cancer mapping system will help to guide research in the State,” said Senator Oppenheimer, “by detecting cancer clusters that may or may not have an environmental connection. The Department of Health’s analysis of cancer anomalies should help to ease public fears, while identifying areas that are worthy of additional investigation.”

About two dozen types of cancer are mapped, including stomach, colon, esophageal, lung, breast and prostate cancer. Environmental facilities in the cancer mapping system include water discharge sites, hazardous waste management facilities, active solid waste

sites, commercial pesticide sellers, and major oil storage facilities. The website appropriately notes that cancer risk depends on a number of non-environmental factors, including smoking, diet and family history.

“It is important that the public not jump to any conclusions about higher than expected incidences of cancer in locations close to an environmental facility,” cautioned Senator Oppenheimer. Beginning this summer, the Department of Health will begin to analyze those areas to determine whether there are non-environmental factors at play, such as higher incidences of prostate cancer in an area with a nursing home that serves large numbers of older men.

Senator Oppenheimer first introduced the cancer mapping legislation with Assemblyman Richard Brodsky (D-Westchester) in 1999. In 2007, she joined forces with Senator Thomas Libous (R-Binghamton), who became the lead sponsor in order to advance the bill in the then Republican controlled Senate. Senator Oppenheimer served as lead co-sponsor and continued to push for passage of the bill in the Senate.

At the time of its enactment in 2008, Assemblyman Brodsky praised Senator Oppenheimer for doing “a terrific job in reaching out and working with Senate Republicans to get their support to pass our bill. In the past Suzi has extended herself by bringing Democrats and Republicans together to pass important laws on other issues such as protecting Long Island Sound and the environment, Kieran’s law, which allows background checks for caregivers who take care of children healthcare laws that cover insurance coverage for mastectomies, and prostate cancer research.”

The cancer mapping system may be viewed online at www.nyhealth.gov/environmental-facilities-and-cancer-mapping. The information is available in both English and Spanish.

