



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Oppenheimer Smart Growth Bill Becomes Law

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Governor signs bill to combat sprawl and promote environmentally sound development

Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck) is pleased to announce that her bill, the State Smart Growth and Infrastructure Policy Act (S.5560B/A.8011B) was signed into law on August 30, 2010. The new law establishes state smart growth infrastructure criteria and requires state agencies to review and consider these guidelines when allocating funds for public infrastructure projects.

The law further requires that the relevant state agencies establish smart growth advisory committees that will consult with residents, environmental groups, local officials and other stakeholders before approving state construction projects.

Smart growth principles encourage economic growth and reinvestment in existing infrastructure to create vibrant communities, while protecting open spaces and natural resources. "In my own Senate district," said Senator Oppenheimer, "the city of White Plains has become a model of a revitalized, smart growth community with a vibrant downtown, walkable neighborhoods and abundant housing, transportation and cultural opportunities."

Senator Oppenheimer's Smart Growth bill was endorsed by a broad coalition of community groups, including health care advocates, senior citizen and consumer groups, disability rights organizations, transportation advocates, environmentalists

and businesses. Supporters of the legislation include the American Institute of Architects, Audubon New York, Empire State Future, Environmental Advocates of New York, the Natural Resources Defense Council, NYS League of Conservation Voters, NYS League of Women Voters, NYS Parks and Trails, NYS Planning Federation, the Preservation League of NYS, Scenic Hudson, and the Sierra Club, as well as the NYS Conference of Mayors, the American Association of Retired People (AARP), the NYS Public Health Association and the NYS Bicycling Coalition.

Assembly-member Sam Hoyt (D-Buffalo, Grand Island) who sponsored the measure in the Assembly, highlighted the legislation's impact on upstate communities.

"Western New York sorely needs smart growth development and these new state guidelines are an important step to ensuring sprawl is combated and neighborhoods are strengthened," said Assemblymember Hoyt. "I am proud to have sponsored a bill that will do so much good for upstate."

"We applaud Assemblyman Hoyt, Senators Oppenheimer and Montgomery and Governor Paterson for enacting the Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act, a critical measure that will encourage economic development while preserving the quality of the environment and reducing costs to the state and municipalities," said Albert E. Caccese, Executive Director of Audubon New York. "As habitat loss from suburban sprawl continues to be a leading threat to birds and other wildlife, this critical measure provides clear direction for state Agencies and authorities to stop facilitating unbridled development and alleviate pressure on our last remaining open spaces."

"By requiring that public infrastructure projects adhere to smart growth principles, we promote sustainability, economic efficiency and better decision-making by the agencies charged with building our public roads, utilities and buildings," concluded Senator Oppenheimer. "Smart growth means smart spending of our limited public infrastructure dollars."