



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Environmental Groups, Community Advocates and Elected Officials Herald Enactment of New Smart Growth Law

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Leading environmental advocates, elected officials and community groups joined together to celebrate enactment of the Smart Growth Infrastructure Policy Act (S.5560B/A.8011B). On August 30, 2010, Governor Paterson signed this important legislation into law, which 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 requires the relevant state agencies to form smart growth advisory committees that will consult with residents, environmental groups, local officials and other stakeholders before approving state construction projects.

Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck), who sponsored the Smart Growth bill in the Senate, thanked the Governor for signing the landmark legislation into law. "This law would not have been possible without a broad coalition of support from health care advocates, senior citizen and consumer groups, disability rights organizations, transportation advocates, environmentalists and businesses. This diverse coalition demonstrates that job creation and the revitalization of our communities can go hand in hand with protecting the environment through smart public infrastructure investments. Smart growth, as its name implies, is a sensible investment in the economic and environmental future of our communities and our state."

Senator Oppenheimer held her press conference in the Village of Ossining, which “is determined to transform itself into a smart growth, transit-oriented, sustainable energy-constructing municipality,” said Village Mayor Bill Hanauer. “We have recently completed an energy audit of all municipal buildings and have begun to retrofit our facilities -- a long-term, expensive process that will quickly translate to tax-savings and atmosphere-saving lessening of carbon fuels. As mayor and member of the Executive Council of the Northern Westchester Energy Action Coalition, I recognize that Ossining and our partners in the Consortium will experience great benefit from this landmark legislation.”

"This law creates a coordinated approach to environmentally sound, safe and responsible development in New York State," said Senator Velmanette Montgomery (D-Brooklyn), a lead co-sponsor of the bill, who noted that the legislation recognizes the State's necessary role in developing smart-growth principles and requiring adherence to the criteria as a condition of approving building projects. “Smart growth planning promotes economic development while preserving natural lands, protecting water and air quality and reusing already developed land. It is a blueprint for reinvesting in existing infrastructure, reclaiming historic buildings and revitalizing New York's communities.”

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Ossining), who was a sponsor of the legislation in the Assembly, said: “I am so pleased to be a sponsor of this smart growth legislation. It will allow improvements to existing infrastructure, while protecting the environment and stimulating the local economy. We can no longer expand without concern for our environment, and without planning in advance for the fiscal impact growth will have on our communities. This new law will ensure that we move forward in a sustainable and responsible way, giving priority to infrastructure maintenance and repairs that preserve our local natural resources and encourage economic development. I applaud the Governor for signing this bill and thank Senator Oppenheimer for sponsoring it.”

"An investment in smart, sustainable growth is an investment in the long-term fiscal, economic and environmental viability of the State," Governor David A. Paterson said. "This Smart Growth law puts our State front-and-center in the movement for downtown revitalization, livable communities and sustainable infrastructure investment. I commend everyone involved with this legislation, particularly the bill sponsors Senator Suzi Oppenheimer and Assemblyman Sam Hoyt. Together we are ushering in a new era of investing infrastructure dollars in Smart Growth and

sustainable communities."

"Thanks to the leadership of Senator Oppenheimer, the Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Act will allow the State to make better infrastructure investments that promote the long-term economic, fiscal, social and environmental sustainability of our regions and communities," said Acting Secretary of State Ruth Naomi Colon. "Senator Oppenheimer has provided a great service to this region and the entire State of New York by promoting reforms that will make New York communities safer, healthier and more prosperous places to live."

Peter Fleischer, Executive Director of Empire State Future, said: "Empire State Future, the State's first and only statewide Smart Growth advocacy coalition notes and applauds the passage and implementation of this forward-thinking bill. Westchester County, and all of New York, need to be developed along lines that are both environmentally and economically sustainable. Revitalizing the county's faded industrial places, protecting its open spaces and quality-of-life is essential. Making effective use of the State's limited funds for infrastructure is imperative. This bill will meaningfully advance these causes."

"We applaud Senator Oppenheimer, Assemblyman Hoyt and Governor Paterson for passing 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 the state to help alleviate unbridled development and pressure on our last remaining farmland and open spaces."

"Architects are extremely committed to sustainable design and construction," said Edward C. Farrell, Executive Director of the American Institute of Architects New York State (AIANY). "Senator Oppenheimer's smart growth bill will extend that concept to state infrastructure projects, resulting in a tremendous victory for both the environment and taxpayers."

"Smart growth and sustainable development are keys to the communities of tomorrow," said Marcia Bystryn, president of the New York League of Conservation Voters. "By growing in a smarter way, New York can create jobs, build vibrant communities and help the environment all at once. The Smart Growth Public

Infrastructure Policy Act sets the stage for a stronger, healthier future, and this victory would not have been possible without the leadership of Senator Suzi Oppenheimer.”

Kate Slevin, Executive Director of Tri-State Transportation Campaign, said: “Smart Growth is synonymous with a smart economy. In the midst of this recession, it is more important than ever to assure that our limited infrastructure dollars are spent wisely. We commend Senator Oppenheimer, Governor Paterson, and the NYS legislature for taking this historic step towards sustainable living.”

“The smart growth law is a game-changer, bringing rationality and coherence to an important vision for New York,” said Melissa Everett, Executive Director of Sustainable Hudson Valley.

“This landmark legislation is the fruit of years of hard work by legislators, advocacy groups and private citizens,” said Christopher Jones, Vice President for Research at Regional Plan Association. “The payoff will be a stronger economy, a better environment and in improved quality of life in communities across the state.”

"Unfettered growth patterns increase the long-term costs of government and strangle the State's economic competitiveness," said Robert M. Simpson, president of the CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity in Syracuse, New York. "This legislation helps ensure that New York State is at the forefront of reducing the long-term fiscal impacts of sprawl through responsible regional planning and investment. I commend the Governor and the legislature for establishing New York as a leader in sustainable urban revitalization."

Today’s press conference took place in the Budarz Theater of the Ossining Public Library, which is itself a LEED certified “green” building, with sustainable gardens and geothermal energy for heating and cooling.