



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

NEW YORK STATE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CITIES 2



SENATOR JEREMY A. COONEY

CHAIR

**THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK**



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Chair
Cities 2
Committees
Codes
Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and
Recreation
Higher Education
Insurance
Procurement and Contracts
Transportation

December 13, 2021

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Temporary President and Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Stewart-Cousins:

I am pleased to transmit the Annual Report of the Senate's Standing Committee on Cities 2 for the 2021 Legislative Session. As Chair, I am proud to continue to lead our efforts to address important matters under my committee's jurisdiction. The committee is committed to addressing the needs of, and issues facing, our cities throughout the state.

During the 2021 session, this committee met virtually once and reported three bills. The Committee also held one hearing and ten roundtables this past year as part of its Regener8 Cities Tour. In addition, the Committee participated in the Finance Committee budget hearings and reviewed all twelve bills assigned to the committee.

I thank my colleagues who served on the Committee for their efforts and support of the work that was done in the committee this year, and I thank you for the continued support from the Majority Conference in establishing this committee and in its operations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy A. Cooney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "C".

Jeremy A. Cooney
New York State Senator,
56th District

2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

NEW YORK STATE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CITIES 2

Senator Jeremy A. Cooney, Chairperson

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Senator Neil D. Breslin Senator Joseph A. Griffo
Senator Timothy M. Kennedy Senator Edward A. Rath
Senator Rachel May
Senator Shelley B. Mayer

COMMITTEE STAFF

David Gordon – Legislative Director & Counsel, Committee Clerk
Joe Vertoske – Public Policy Advisor

COMMITTEE JURISDICTION AND OVERVIEW

The New York State Senate Standing Committee on Cities 2 has legislative oversight responsibilities for issues concerning cities outside of New York City. The committee was established this year, recognizing that small and mid-sized cities outside the five boroughs face unique challenges, including: aging infrastructure, housing blight, municipal labor hiring, public safety policies, economic development, and access to transportation and broadband resources. The committee is poised to foster opportunities for these municipalities to become agents of economic and population growth for the State as we compete with other states and global cities for workforce talent and investment.

During the 2021 Legislative Session, twelve bills were referred to the Committee for its review. Of these bills, all three were reported from the Committee, passed in both houses, and subsequently chaptered. This work was conducted through one committee meeting. A list of all bills that were reported from the committee is provided at the end of this report.

In addition to its regular meetings, the Committee held one hearing and ten roundtables across the state as part of its Regener8 Tour. The intent of this tour was to listen to, and learn from, cross-sector leaders in upstate cities across the state to better understand their regional needs. This culminated in a public hearing to receive testimony surrounding the following areas of focus: municipal needs and strengths, infrastructure, downtown development and revitalization initiatives, poverty reduction, and business development. The outcomes resulting from this hearing will help guide legislative priorities for the Committee in 2022.

COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

The following key bills were acted on by the committee in 2021:

S.1761C, known as the Rochester Schools Modernization Program (RSMP), provides additional authority to modernize educational facilities in the City of Rochester. This recently chaptered law includes a \$475 million investment as the third and final phase of this multi-year project and will improve the technological and educational infrastructure in many schools across the Rochester City School District. Ultimately, this will enhance environments that promote student learning, development, and engagement, while ensuring that all students have equitable access to resources.

S.1033 and **S.4850** relate to bonds and notes of the City of Yonkers and the City of Buffalo, respectively. **S.1033** allows Yonkers the vital action of improving the city's financial stability and independence by negotiating the private sales of its bonds and notes. The continuation of this authority will allow more cost-effective financing for the city. Likewise, **S.4850** gives the City of Buffalo a valuable tool to provide expeditious funding for projects which require immediate attention.

TWO HOUSE BILLS

In 2021, 3 of the 3 bills referred to the Standing Committee on Cities 2 passed both houses of the Legislature. Of these bills, the Governor has signed all 3.

Bill No.	Sponsor	Summary	Action
S1033	Stewart-Cousins	Relates to bonds and notes of the city of Yonkers	Signed, Chapter 168 of 2021
S1761C	Cooney	Relates to the authority to modernize educational facilities in the city of Rochester	Signed, Chapter 614 of 2021
S4850	Kennedy	Facilitates the marketing of any issue of serial bonds or notes of the city of Buffalo issued on or before a certain date	Signed, Chapter 170 of 2021

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Bill No.	Sponsor	Summary	Significant Action
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