

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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ORTT/HELMING: BROADBAND TAX LAWSUIT/REPEAL KEY TO EXPANSION

Senator Pam Helming today joined with Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt in support of a recent lawsuit filed to force New York to disclose the tax and fee structure of its destructive new broadband tax and fee scheme. This measure makes it more difficult and expensive to expand broadband in rural and underserved areas.

“At a time when more and more of us are relying on broadband to work remotely, help kids learn from home, or connect with our medical providers, Senate Democrats in Albany are finding new and even more destructive ways to make the internet more expensive. We should be encouraging the expansion of affordable and reliable broadband everywhere in our state. Now is not the time to hit the PAUSE button on expansion and risk the loss of even more job opportunities. Senate Democrats need to immediately disclose where this money is going and what exactly the fees are for this supposed “revenue enhancer” ie. tax,” said Helming.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has forced millions of New Yorkers to shift from in-person communication to online connectivity and has highlighted the severe lack of broadband access for hundreds of thousands of residents in Upstate and Western New York communities,” said Leader Ortt. “Workers and students lacked adequate access to broadband for at the height of the pandemic, illustrating the monumental failure of the Governor’s so-called ‘Broadband for All’ program. Ignoring these drastic shortcomings, Democrats are now tacking on millions in new fees that will make critical broadband buildout next to impossible. Our children, our workforce, our farms, and our small businesses will continue to suffer under these Democrats policies and taxes.”

A new fee on broadband installers was approved in the State Budget. It requires the NYS DOT to collect new fees from companies that build lines in state right-of-ways or under highways. It goes even further and actually requires these companies to pay an annual fee per foot of broadband, which will then likely be passed onto consumers, small businesses and farms who use this service.

According to the Watertown Daily News, “The fee recently stopped a town of Louisville broadband expansion project with Slic Network Solutions that’s been in the works for two years.”

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