



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Ortt's Bill For Asbestos Removal Incentive Passes in Senate

ROBERT G. ORTT May 29, 2015

| ISSUE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT, HAZARDS**

### *Asbestos Remediation Tax Credit Encourages Development of Blighted Buildings; Revitalizes Economy*

Legislation sponsored by State Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I – North Tonawanda) would give tax credits to eligible taxpayers and developers who pay to have asbestos removed from their residential or commercial properties. The Asbestos Remediation Tax Credit bill (S2961), which passed in the Senate yesterday, would fight blight and help spur economic development across the state.

“When I was the mayor of North Tonawanda, I became very familiar with the issues contractors or companies had when removing asbestos,” **said Sen. Ortt.** “It can be very costly and pose a health hazard to the community if not handled properly. This bill would help move projects forward by curbing costs of remediation. And, it would encourage clean up of old buildings or homes, in turn, revitalizing a neighborhood and providing opportunities for economic redevelopment and reinvestment.”

Whether asbestos-filled structures need to be demolished to make way for new builds, or are planned for adaptive reuse, costs necessary to safely and legally remediate asbestos are unfeasibly high. As a result, many developers and home owners don't rectify the situation, and structures fall into disrepair leading to blight, abandonment and disinvestment.

**Buffalo Niagara Partnership's President & CEO Dottie Gallagher-Cohen said,** "Providing incentives for remediating asbestos is critical if we are ever going to fully realize the potential of Western New York's old building stock and capitalize on the current momentum of redevelopment happening in our community. Asbestos remediation is incredibly expensive work and without tax credits, developers will think twice about rehabbing a building with asbestos that is currently a strain on a neighborhood. With the recent long-term extension of the Brownfield Cleanup Program, meaningful incentives for asbestos remediation would be the one-two punch we truly need to spark investment, especially in our older neighborhoods. The Buffalo Niagara Partnership applauds Senator Ortt for his leadership on this issue, and is grateful that all the members of the WNY State Senate delegation voted in favor of this important legislation."

The credit would cover 20 percent of incurred costs for asbestos removal, and would be capped at \$1 million over a three-year period. The \$1 million cap on claimable credits for asbestos remediation would help guide private capital investment into existing infrastructure and assets. Furthermore, it would address the public safety concern and pave the way for growth and redevelopment in our cities and region.

**Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster said,** "Asbestos abatement is often the first and most expensive roadblock to building rehabilitation. As Niagara Falls welcomes more and more building renovations, S2961 would be an important economic development tool, leading to more forward thinking renovations and fewer demolitions."

**City of North Tonawanda Mayor Art Pappas said,** "I support this bill considering it would help defray the costs of asbestos remediation for older and historic structures. By reducing the costs, this type of credit can encourage reuse of a building and spark economic development of new buildings. In addition, this bill would breathe new life into our neighborhoods."

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.