



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Hinchey Passes Over 50 Senate Bills in 2023 State Legislative Session

MICHELLE HINCHEY June 8, 2023



### Utility Advocacy, Housing, Climate and Farmland Protection Among Hinchey's Top 2023 Legislative Priorities

**KINGSTON, NY** – Senator Michelle Hinchey wrapped up her third legislative session in the New York State Senate with 51 of her bills passing the Senate, including 55% by unanimous votes and 25 passing both legislative houses, which are eligible to be called up to the Governor's desk to be signed into law.

“With one of my bills already signed into law and 24 more ready to advance to the Governor's desk, we've closed on another productive State Legislative Session, in which we built major momentum for many pieces of big-issue legislation that I'm proud to champion for our Hudson Valley communities,”

**Senator Michelle Hinchey said.** “I’ve worked to close the cell service gaps so that we can achieve statewide cellular coverage for all New Yorkers. I’ve fought to protect New Yorkers’ wallets from unfair utility billing and create greater transparency within our utility industry. I’ve advanced key measures to expand housing stability and put New York in the best position to provide attainable, secure housing for all, including creating our State’s first-ever Short-Term Rental Registry. And I’ve introduced critically-needed bills to make sure we’re creating a clean energy future that keeps our farmland protected and our food supply stable. I’m incredibly proud of the work we’ve done this session and will continue fighting to make sure the issues most important to our Hudson Valley communities are prioritized and signed into law.”

## **Protecting Ratepayers From Unfair Utility Billing**

Key bills championed by Hinchey to bring transparency to the utility industry and protect New Yorkers’ wallets include legislation to ban estimated billing, which [passed the Senate unanimously](#). Hinchey also sponsors legislation that passed the Senate to [prevent utility companies from charging customers if they send a bill over two months late](#) and require companies to send a two-year history of past charges with each bill so customers can compare past usage and confirm that they are being billed accurately. In the coming weeks, State Assembly lawmakers are expected to return to Albany to pass select legislation that remains, and Hinchey’s two utility bills are among those expected to pass both houses.

## **Delivering Reliable Cell Coverage to All New Yorkers**

A priority issue for Hinchey is closing the cell coverage gaps plaguing areas in rural and Upstate New York, where thousands of the Senator’s constituents experience dead zones or unreliable service. One of Hinchey’s most important bills introduced this year is [The Cellular Mapping Act](#), which passed the Senate unanimously, and would direct the Public Service Commission (PSC) to study the coverage and reliability of cell phone service in New York State and develop a comprehensive map to steer the build-out for statewide coverage.

## **Addressing the Housing Crisis**

Senator Hinchey continues to address the housing crisis plaguing Hudson Valley communities and introduced two key pieces of legislation to tackle prevalent local issues, both of which passed the Senate. One bill would [create New York’s first Short-Term Rental Registry](#) to establish a comprehensive, state-level view over this expansive hospitality sector that is currently removing local housing supply, raising rents to unaffordable heights, and displacing long-term residents. Another bill sponsored by Hinchey would help communities institute emergency housing measures and stabilize the housing crisis by [requiring property owners to submit timely and accurate vacancy rate surveys](#).

## **Protecting New York Farmland and Food Security**

Senator Hinchey has led the charge to protect Upstate communities, farmland, and food security from inequitable solar development practices while ensuring New York is on track to meet the goals of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). Two bills that have passed both legislative houses and are ready to be called up to the Governor's desk include the [Smart Integrated Tools For Energy Development \(SITED\) Act](#), which would require the New York State Energy and Research Authority (NYSERDA) to develop a Clean Energy Mapping Tool allowing communities to identify the local lands best suited for renewable energy siting and designating preferred spots for developers to search. Another measure would [establish an Agrivoltaics Research Program](#) administered by Cornell CALS to develop the knowledge base that will help guide the effective implementation of dual-use agricultural lands with solar arrays to help New York meet clean energy goals while preserving viable food-growing farmland.

Another Hinchey bill would [require the Office of Renewable Energy Siting \(ORES\) to consider, for the first time, agricultural impacts on active farmland](#) when reviewing, siting, designing, constructing, and operating renewable energy facilities. Hinchey also sponsors a bill to [develop a statewide solar project tracking system](#), which directs ORES and the PSC to create a publicly available statewide map of all approved and proposed renewable energy projects at every step of the application process to understand what communities may be disproportionately impacted by targeted overdevelopment and farmland loss and ensure CLCPA goals are on track to being met. Both of these bills passed the Senate.

## **Expanding Rural Healthcare**

Senator Hinchey has fought to protect and expand access to local health services, including through the following bills that passed the State Senate this session. One bill, which is eligible to be called up to the Governor's desk, [requires the Department of Health to publish data regarding the delivery and utilization of Consumer Directed Personal Assistance \(CDPA\) and home healthcare services](#) annually on its website to bring needed transparency as the homecare crisis continues to unfold across New York State. Another bill would [allow motor vehicle ambulance services to carry blood products and transfuse blood](#) to patients being transported between hospitals. Currently, there are onerous regulations that limit the authority of ambulance services from distributing blood transfusions to patients being transported between hospitals, which Hinchey's bill would amend. Other measures include legislation to [improve care for New Yorkers with Traumatic Brain Injury](#) and legislation [ensuring hospital transparency surrounding policy-based exclusions](#), including reproductive and gender-affirming care, requiring hospitals to list on their website the healthcare they have chosen, per hospital policy, not to provide at their facility.

## **Boosting Access to Healthy, Local Food**

Hinchey has made it the hallmark of her role as Chair of the Senate Agriculture and Food Committee to introduce policies and investments that make New York's homegrown food supply accessible to all New

Yorkers while creating new markets to support farm businesses. One bill sponsored by Hinchey would [establish first-ever procurement goals for state agencies](#) that spend over \$2 million annually on food, providing a direct line for all agencies to buy from New York farmers. Another Hinchey bill would provide municipal institutions, including hospitals, nursing homes, and homeless shelters, the flexibility to source food from local businesses that meet their values based on [Good Food Purchasing standards](#), which can include environmental sustainability, health and nutrition, animal welfare, economic benefits to New York State economies, and workers' rights.

## **Supporting Upstate Economic Development**

Senator Hinchey is committed to supporting Upstate businesses and creating an environment that makes it easier to do business in New York. At the end of the 2023 Session, Governor Hochul signed Hinchey's bill to [extend cannabis cultivator and processor licenses](#), which are still needed to ensure that New York farmers and processors can remain the backbone of the burgeoning cannabis market. Another bill, which is eligible to be called up to the Governor's desk, would [authorize a one-time sale of stockpiled cannabis to Tribal Nations](#), helping farmers get their products to market due to the slow rollout of the retail sector. A third bill sponsored by Hinchey would remove an unnecessary burden requiring farm brewers and restaurant brewers to reapply for their operating licenses annually. Hinchey's bill removes that burden by [requiring SLA to extend operating licenses for farm-based and restaurant brewers to a three-year term](#), putting them on par with farm cideries and wineries.

Other bills that passed the Senate with Hinchey's support include [The Clean Slate Act](#), which would seal old conviction records so that New Yorkers can obtain jobs and housing as local businesses and economies statewide continue to grapple with severe staffing shortages. A diverse coalition advocated for the passage of Clean Slate, including the Business Council of New York State, [labor unions](#), and Fortune 500 companies such as [JP Morgan Chase](#), Verizon, and Microsoft. Clean Slate passed both houses of the State Legislature and is eligible to be signed into law. Hinchey also helped advance legislation [banning the dumping of radioactive wastewater from decommissioned power plants into the Hudson River](#), which passed the Senate unanimously. Hinchey is among the legislators pushing for the bill's Assembly passage when it reconvenes in the coming weeks.

**A complete list of the 51 bills sponsored by Hinchey, which passed the Senate this session, is as follows.**

**Hinchey bills that passed both the Senate and Assembly include:**

- **[S7354](#)-HINCHEY:** Extends certain authorizations to minimally process and distribute cannabis products
- **[S2956A](#)-HINCHEY:** Authorizes the New York state energy research and development authority to develop a clean energy outreach and community planning program
- **[S7295A](#)-HINCHEY:** Authorizes conditional adult-use cultivator and processor licensees to sell tested, packaged, and sealed cannabis products and cannabis to a cannabis dispensing facility licensed by a tribal nation for retail
- **[S7081](#)-HINCHEY:** Establishes an agrivoltaics research program
- **[S6443](#)-HINCHEY:** Provides the liquor authority the ability to set the duration of brewer's licenses, farm brewery licenses, and restaurant-brewer licenses to three years.
- **[S4858](#)-HINCHEY:** Establishes the Director of hospice and palliative care access and quality within DOH
- **[S1054](#)-HINCHEY:** Increases the number of cuisine trails in the state
- **[S1792](#)-HINCHEY:** Designates March 8th each year as a day of commemoration, to be known as International Women's Day
- **[S5345](#)-HINCHEY:** Increases the available number of nominations for the historic business preservation registry per year
- **[S5526](#)-HINCHEY:** Lowers the threshold for eligibility for the appropriation of moneys for the promotion of agriculture and domestic arts
- **[S1042A](#)-HINCHEY:** Prohibits unlawful dissemination or publication of intimate images created by digitization and of sexually explicit depictions of an individual; repealer
- **[S1683A](#)-HINCHEY:** Requires the Department of Health to publish certain information relating to home care services usage on the department's website on a quarterly basis
- **[S6326](#)-HINCHEY:** Authorizes certain commercial feed to include hemp seed
- **[S6446](#)-HINCHEY:** Extends the authority of the county of Ulster to impose an additional 1 percent sales and compensating use tax
- **[S1794](#)-HINCHEY:** Relates to the classification of the town of Ulster in the county of Ulster

- [S6450](#)-**HINCHEY**: Extends the authorization for imposition of additional sales and compensating use taxes in Greene County
- [S6449](#)-**HINCHEY**: Extends the authorization of the county of Greene to impose an additional mortgage recording tax
- [S6448](#)-**HINCHEY**: Extends the authority of the County of Columbia to impose an additional real estate transfer tax
- [S6896](#)-**HINCHEY**: Relates to hotel and motel taxes in Ulster County
- [S7218](#)-**HINCHEY**: Relates to the qualifications for holding the office of assistant district attorney in the county of Greene
- [S6447](#)-**HINCHEY**: Extends the authority of the county of Columbia to impose an additional 1 percent sales and compensating use tax
- [S6185](#)-**HINCHEY**: Includes certain lands used in single operation for the production of tree nuts in the definition of agricultural land
- [S6622A](#)-**HINCHEY**: Allows Brian Laurange Jr. to be eligible to take the civil service exam for the position of police officer for the Columbia County Sheriff's Office
- [S6807A](#)-**HINCHEY**: Authorizes the county of Columbia to reinstate and employ Paul Strobel as a part-time deputy sheriff
- [S7219](#)-**HINCHEY**: Exempts the Leeds Hose Company No. 1, Inc. from the requirement that the percentage of non-resident fire department members not exceed forty-five percent of the membership

**Hinchey bills that passed the Senate and remain a priority for full legislative passage include:**

- [S885B](#)-**HINCHEY**: Regulates short-term residential rentals
- [S4234A](#)-**HINCHEY**: Relates to the finality of certain utility charges and the contents of utility bills
- [S6404](#)-**HINCHEY**: Directs the office of renewable energy to post a map on its website and create an informational tab containing certain information about proposed major renewable energy facility sites
- [S6318A](#)-**HINCHEY**: Directs the public service commission to review cellular service within the state

- **[S1793C](#)-HINCHEY:** Relates to the design of uniform standards and conditions relating to the construction and operation of major renewable energy facilities
- **[S1684A](#)-HINCHEY:** Relates to the information to be included in vacancy rate studies
- **[S6288](#)-HINCHEY:** Enacts "Melanie's law"
- **[S1687](#)-HINCHEY:** Provides a rebuttable presumption relating to certification as a minority and women-owned business enterprise
- **[S6226A](#)-HINCHEY:** Provides for availability of ambulance services to store and distribute blood and initiate and administer blood transfusions
- **[S6955](#)-HINCHEY:** Provides that certain purchase contracts to purchase food can be awarded to a qualified bidder who fulfills certain standards when such bid is not more than 10% higher than the lowest responsible bidder
- **[S1003A](#)-HINCHEY:** Relates to providing information to patients and the public on policy-based exclusions
- **[S1056A](#)-HINCHEY:** Relates to land used in agricultural production
- **[S1290](#)-HINCHEY:** Relates to a state flag for raising awareness of veteran suicide
- **[S1413](#)-HINCHEY:** Establishes the position of Catskill park coordinator within the department of environmental conservation
- **[S1443A](#)-HINCHEY:** Relates to stretch limousine age and mileage parameters
- **[S1478](#)-HINCHEY:** Directs the commissioner of health and commissioner of the office for people with developmental disabilities to conduct a study of the delivery of services to individuals with traumatic brain injury
- **[S1851A](#)-HINCHEY:** Permits the rendering of an estimated bill from a utility corporation or municipality under certain circumstances
- **[S2236](#)-HINCHEY:** Establishes a one-stop farming hotline with the Cornell Cooperative Extension
- **[S3125](#)-HINCHEY:** Establishes procurement goals for New York state food products purchased by state agencies
- **[S3582](#)-HINCHEY:** Relates to the treatment of excess credits for the rehabilitation of historic barns

- **[S6365](#)-HINCHEY:** Relates to the inspection of certain vacated property for abandoned animals
- **[S6518](#)-HINCHEY:** Establishes a New York Main Street development center in the division of housing and community renewal
- **[S6923](#)-HINCHEY:** Requires railroad corporations to conduct a comprehensive safety inspection when a freight train is parked in a train yard prior to traveling on tracks within the state
- **[S1480](#)-HINCHEY:** Establishes November twenty-sixth of each year as a day of a commemoration known as Sojourner Truth Day
- **[S5057A](#)-HINCHEY:** Allows Benjamin Doty to be eligible to take the civil service exam for the position of Columbia County Sheriff
- **[S4669](#)-HINCHEY:** Relates to the ceremonial designation of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Mid-Hudson Bridge as the "Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Mid-Hudson Bridge"

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