



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Senator Griffo Looks to Eliminate Assessment Fee

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO September 2, 2009

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### **Griffo Pushes Measure to Repeal Utility Fee**

UTICA - State Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R-I-C, Rome) today called for action on a bill he has co-sponsored to wipe out a six-fold increase in a fee tacked on to customers' utility bills.

"Time after time, New York State's leadership uses hidden taxes and fees to support government instead of taking the necessary step of eliminating fees and lowering taxes so that we can revive our businesses and help consumers," said Griffo. "This year's budget snuck in something called that Utility Service Conservation Assessment that, in essence, diverts a fee that was going to the Public Service Commission into the General Fund, and then expands the size of the fee as well. This fee has nothing to do with the misleading label attached to it, and everything to do with the state leadership's efforts to grab more money from consumers in any fashion they can."

Griffo said that the fee, which rose of .33% of a utility bill to 2%, will raise \$520 million for the General Fund. He said he has co-sponsored Senate Bill 6132 to repeal the increase.

Griffo also questioned the practice of attaching higher delivery charges to existing utility rates and stressed that it merited further examination. "In a summer where my office has received dozens of call from people who are already seeing delivery charges on their electric or gas that exceed their actual usage by fifty percent or more, this is worst time to be socked with this fee." This March, Senator Griffo successfully fought back New York Power Authority proposals that would have increased rates which would have had to been absorbed by ratepayers.

"The nickel-and-diming of taxpayers has to stop," Griffo said. "This fee, and all of the tax and fee increases that this administration is trying to jam down the throats of New Yorkers need to be repealed or reversed. Instead of making the size of the General Fund Albany's top priority, we should be helping consumers that are forced to tap their rainy days funds in this time of severe economic stress."