



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Legislature Passes Oppenheimer Smart Growth Bill

SUZI OPPENHEIMER June 29, 2010

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Legislation combats sprawl and promotes environmentally sound infrastructure development

Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck) is pleased to announce passage of her bill, the State Smart Growth and Infrastructure Policy Act (S.5560B/A.8011B), which will combat modern development practices that have contributed to urban and suburban sprawl. The legislation passed both houses of the legislature last week and will now be sent to the

Governor for his consideration.

“My bill establishes state smart growth public infrastructure criteria and requires state agencies to review and consider these criteria in making decisions regarding new projects,” noted Senator Oppenheimer. “It ensures that publicly funded construction projects use, maintain or improve existing infrastructure and protect natural resources. New construction projects will also have to adhere to smart growth principles.”

The legislation requires relevant state agencies to establish smart growth advisory committees that would consult with residents, environmental groups and other stakeholders before approving state infrastructure projects.

A recent survey of businesses by the New York State Economic Development Council found that “quality of life” is a significant consideration for companies when deciding where to locate. “This legislation will improve the quality of life in our communities by focusing public infrastructure in a way that complements and improves upon existing development, while preserving open spaces and protecting our natural resources,” said the Senator. “Smart growth principles promote sustainability, economic efficiency and better decision-making by the agencies charged with building our public roads, utilities and buildings.”

Senator Oppenheimer pointed to the city of White Plains in her own Senate district as an example of a community revitalized by smart growth development. “White Plains offers a vibrant downtown with walkable neighborhoods, open spaces and abundant housing, transportation and cultural opportunities,” noted Senator Oppenheimer.

The Smart Growth legislation was endorsed by a broad coalition of community groups, including health care advocates, senior citizen and consumer groups, disability rights organizations, transportation advocates, environmentalists and businesses. Supporters of

the legislation include the American Institute of Architects, Audubon New York, Empire State Future, Environmental Advocates of New York, the Natural Resources Defense Council, NYS League of Conservation Voters, NYS League of Women Voters, NYS Parks and Trails, NYS Planning Federation, the Preservation League of NYS, Scenic Hudson, and the Sierra Club, as well as the NYS Conference of Mayors, the American Association of Retired People (AARP), the NYS Public Health Association and the NYS Bicycling Coalition.

“We applaud Assemblyman Hoyt and Senators Oppenheimer and Montgomery, and the New York State Senate and Assembly for passing the Smart Growth Infrastructure Policy Act, a critical measure that will encourage economic development while preserving the quality of the environment and reducing costs to municipalities,” said Albert E. Caccese, Executive Director of Audubon New York.

Assemblyman Sam Hoyt (D-Buffalo), the Assembly sponsor of the bill, praised Senator Oppenheimer’s efforts , saying: “Suzi Oppenheimer is an incredible senator. She took the bill; she became a champion of it and said ‘we’re going to get it done.’ So the progress we had made over the years in the other house was finally complemented by the incredible energy, commitment and dedication of Senator Oppenheimer. With the full expectation that Governor Paterson will sign the bill, New York State for the first time, after years of effort and energy, will have a very important, comprehensive Smart Growth bill on its books.”