



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo's legislation would give municipalities greater leverage to purchase streetlights from electric companies

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO June 19, 2015

| ISSUE: **CITIES, ENERGY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, UTILITIES**

| COMMITTEE: **ENERGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS**



ALBANY – The New York State Legislature this week passed a bill authored by Senator Joseph Griffo that would give municipalities greater leverage in purchasing streetlights from a utility company and making them more energy efficient.

The bill will be sent to the Governor for his consideration.

As municipalities across the state look to save money by utilizing more energy efficient technology, Griffo's legislation could have significant implications for many communities across the state, including Utica, Rome and Watertown.

Many municipalities have expressed a desire to purchase streetlights from the electric companies that own them in hopes of converting to more cost-effective LED lighting. But many times, these municipalities have found it difficult to simply initiate negotiations with their local electric corporations.

Griffo's bill ([S5205B](#)) would establish specific steps to make it easier for a municipality to initiate a proceeding for the Public Service Commission (PSC) to facilitate an ownership transfer agreement between the owner of the streetlights and the petitioning municipality. Utilities would not be forced to sell their property, but the bill would facilitate a discussion between the parties and would also require that all investor-owned utilities have an appropriate tariff in place which is necessary to complete such a transaction.

The bill also directs the Public Service Commission to work with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority – or NYSDERA – to identify energy efficiencies or funding that could help municipalities try to save money over time by purchasing their streetlights and supporting infrastructure.

Senator Griffo, R-Rome, said: “A number of municipalities have explored the possibility of cutting costs by purchasing streetlights from their local utility company, but they've struggled to even get the companies to consider negotiations. As Chairman of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, I recognized this as a statewide issue that I believe this legislation will help address. While it won't force utility companies to sell their streetlights, it will give municipalities a little more leverage to explore options with respect to acquiring streetlights and supporting infrastructure, or perhaps to make other

arrangements with the utility, such as a phase-in of more energy efficient lighting equipment while the utility continues to own and maintain the streetlights and wires."

Because PSC proceedings are open to the public, other municipalities could learn and benefit from the cost-benefit analyses involved with each locality's set of circumstances, and input from both the Public Service Commission and NYSERDA with regard to suggestions for energy efficiency measures and available funds would be invaluable.

The bill passed Wednesday in the Senate and Thursday in the Assembly, where it is sponsored by Assemblywoman Patricia Fahy, D-Albany.

###