



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Jacobs, Schimminger Announce Major Enhancements to Mitigation Fund

SENATOR JACOBS April 18, 2017

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(Buffalo, NY) – Assemblyman Robin Schimminger (140<sup>th</sup> AD) and Senator Chris Jacobs (60<sup>th</sup> SD) were joined by Town of Tonawanda Supervisor Joseph Emminger and Ken-Ton Union Free School District Interim Superintendent Stephen Bovino in announcing what they called a “major win” for taxpayers in the town and school district in the wake of the closure of the Huntley Power Generation Station last March. The largest taxpayer in the town,

Huntley's closure resulted in a loss of roughly \$6 million in property tax revenue annually to the school district, town and Erie County.

Through Schimminger's and Jacobs' efforts in their respective houses, the current five-year Electric Generation Facility Cessation Mitigation program will be restructured and extended with a new, seven-year payment schedule. It calls for 80 percent reimbursement of lost tax revenues for the first year, then decreases 10 percent per year to a 20 percent reimbursement in year seven. The previous version of the program reduced reimbursement rates more rapidly at 15 percent a year. Additionally, the fund will increase from \$30 million to \$45 million in the year 2020.

"I am extremely pleased that Assemblyman Schimminger and I were successful in amending budget language that will further protect taxpayers in Tonawanda from the disastrous effects of the closure of the Huntly Station," said Senator Jacobs. "In addition to providing more temporary relief for the town and school district, the extended schedule for receiving assistance gives all stakeholders much needed additional time to replace any tax shortfalls as a result of the Huntley closure as well as evaluate and plan for the future of the site," the Senator added.

"Securing this amended language is great progress that Senator Jacobs and I are both very proud of," said Assemblyman Schimminger. "By securing these further improvements to the program, we are ensuring more time for municipalities and school districts to stabilize in the wake of Huntley's closure while providing more financial help. These changes were in response to our ongoing conversation with community leaders. Now that we have achieved this initial step, we will continue to work with our partners and stakeholders to replenish our local tax base," Schimminger added.

The new program is projected to provide an approximate \$5.4 million in additional relief over seven years. Broken down by entity, the school district would receive approximately \$2.7 million more than under the current mitigation program, the town approximately \$1.8 million more, and the county approximately \$1 million more in additional aid.

"Assemblyman Schimminger and Senator Jacobs have both shown great leadership on this issue, recognizing that Huntley was also a state and regional asset that benefitted people across New York State," said Town of Tonawanda Supervisor Joe Emminger. "Thanks to the enhancements of this program in the final budget, the Town can better plan for what lies ahead without immediately or as severely impacting the quality of life and public safety in our community," the Supervisor added.

"On behalf of the Ken-Ton School District, I would like to extend my thanks to Sen. Jacobs and Assemblyman Schimminger for working so hard to secure this funding for Ken-Ton and other municipalities that have been impacted by power plant closures," said Interim School Superintendent Stephen Bovino. "The Huntley plant was the district's largest taxpayer before it closed. This funding will further help us transition from the PILOT revenue once received from the Huntley plant while minimizing the impact on students, and it will buy additional time as planning forges ahead to repurpose the Huntley site," Bovino concluded.