



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Griffo to state Health Department: Loss of funding will affect tick-borne disease prevention efforts

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO June 17, 2019

ALBANY – New York State Senate Deputy Minority Leader Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, announced today that he has sent a letter to state Department of Health Commissioner Howard Zucker regarding concerns with the amount of funding that has been allocated to address Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases in New York State.

As a member of the Senate's Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Task Force, Deputy Minority Leader Griffo and his colleagues in the Republican conference have made it a priority to ensure that funding has been included in the State Budget to combat this epidemic, securing a record \$1 million in last year's budget and \$2.6 million since 2015.

However, despite cases of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases steadily rising, the 2019-20 State Budget crafted by downstate Democrats allocated nearly \$1 million less than last year.

"The threat of tick-borne illnesses continues to grow throughout New York State," Deputy Minority Leader Griffo said. "I remain concerned about the impact that a decrease in funding will have on our efforts to combat this issue and will continue to advocate for the funding and resources that we need to appropriately address this significant problem."

A copy of Deputy Minority Leader Griffo's letter is below:

Commissioner Howard A. Zucker, M.D.

New York State Department of Health

Corning Tower

Empire State Plaza

Albany, NY 12237

Dear Commissioner Zucker:

In 2014, the Senate Republican Conference established the Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases, subsequently making the allocation of funds to combat tick-borne diseases one of its annual priorities. Unfortunately, the 2019 New York State Budget will allocate nearly \$1 million less than last year to fight this growing health issue.

As cases of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases continue to steadily rise, I am aware that loss of this funding is likely to pose a challenge to the state Department of Health and want to fully understand what impact this significant decrease in funding will mean in our efforts to combat these health issues. Likewise, I ask whether there are any discretionary funds at your disposal or possible budget transfers to help make up for the loss of funding.

I appreciate any information you can provide me regarding what the Department of Health will reasonably be able to accomplish given the level of funding this year, whether this funding is sufficient to meet the needs of our residents as it relates to Lyme Disease and other tick-borne diseases and what level of funding would be required to adequately respond to this significant health issue.

I look forward to, and appreciate, your prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Griffo

Senator

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