



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

## Senator Metzger Applauds Appointment of Cary Institute Disease Ecologist to State Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Working Group

JEN METZGER June 25, 2020

| ISSUE: **LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES, THE TICK PROJECT, LYME RESEARCH**



**Hudson Valley and Catskills, NY...** New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins has appointed a local scientist from the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies to an important state body, based on the recommendations of Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42). Dr. Richard S. Ostfeld, a Distinguished Senior Scientist at the Institute and former professor of biology and ecology at several universities, has been appointed to the state's Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Working Group.

"Dr. Ostfeld is one of New York's foremost authorities on tick-borne illnesses and has been leading cutting-edge research on prevention at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies," **said Senator Metzger**. "He has a unique and important contribution to make to state policy, and I am thrilled that he has been appointed by the Majority Leader to this working group. While COVID-19 has been at the forefront of public health concerns, Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses continue to take a toll on our communities, and preventive strategies remain crucial to protecting public health."

Over the course of his 30-year career, Dr. Ostfeld has worked with colleagues at the New York State Department of Health, federal representatives, state legislators, and officials at the county and local level on the science of tick-borne disease, and has also collaborated with scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on those issues. At the Cary Institute in Millbrook, Dr. Ostfeld, a disease ecologist, directs the research organization's Lyme disease prevention study, The Tick Project, and works with his team to advance understanding of tick ecology, mitigate disease risk, and predict when and where exposure to tick-borne diseases will be high. Drawing on his nearly three decades of experience in the space, Dr. Ostfeld will certainly be an asset to the state-level Working Group, whose responsibilities include reviewing current best practices for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of Lyme and tick-borne diseases for New York State.

In 2019, Senator Metzger announced \$100,000 in state funding to support The Tick Project. The first-term Senator worked to secure this state funding as part of a 2019-2020 budget appropriation, which came through the New York State Department of Health budget. The funding for this work was part of a larger \$250,000 appropriation that Metzger secured in the last weeks of the 2019 legislative session to fight tick-borne diseases.

**Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said**, "I thank and commend Senator Jen Metzger for her recommendations to ensure that her communities are well represented.

Senator Metzger put forth a great amount of effort to identify and advocate for the best voices to represent the region on these important councils. I look forward to the positive impact that Dr. Richard Ostfeld will have on the Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Working Group."

During the 2019 legislative session, Metzger, who chairs the State Senate Committee on Agriculture, [introduced legislation](#) to promote understanding and awareness of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases among farmers and farmworkers, who are in a high risk occupation when it comes to these diseases. She also introduced a bill with Assemblymember Didi Barrett to address the threat of the long-horned tick, which was [signed into law last year](#).

*Jen Metzger represents the 42nd Senate District, which includes all of Sullivan County and parts of Delaware, Orange, and Ulster Counties. Senator Metzger serves as Chair of the Agriculture Committee and sits on the Environmental Conservation, Education, Health, Energy and Telecommunications, Local Government, Women's Issues, Domestic Animal Welfare, and Legislative Commission on Rural Resources Committees.*

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### 2019-S5873

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate

- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Directs the commissioner of agriculture and markets to develop and conduct a public awareness campaign regarding Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases

May 16, 2019

In Senate Committee **Finance**

Sponsored by **Jen Metzger**

Do you support this bill?