



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

## Westchester Reopening Update: 7-10-2020

SHELLEY B. MAYER July 10, 2020

| ISSUE: **ETPA, SENIORS, HAZARD PAY, SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN, CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

**WESTCHESTER  
REOPENING  
UPDATE  
7-10-2020**



Dear Friends:

The Mid-Hudson Region and Westchester County were approved to enter Phase Four of reopening on Tuesday, July 7th. Although the state continues to control the spread of the virus, we cannot let our guard--or masks--down. As of Friday, July 10th, halfway through 2020, the state has lost nearly 25,000 New Yorkers to the coronavirus since the beginning of the pandemic. For perspective, in all of 2017, the most recently [available numbers](#) from the

CDC show that the state lost 4,517 to the flu/pneumonia. The coronavirus is much deadlier than a seasonal flu, and due to the nature of the virus, it is much more contagious than the seasonal flu. Asymptomatic individuals who are not aware that they have the virus, but are contagious, are extremely dangerous and potentially lethal at large gatherings. We must continue to make decisions based on the science and facts. Please continue to wear a mask, [properly](#), and limit large gatherings with friends and family. I understand the frustration & the desire to go back to our normal way of life, and the economic hardship this has taken, but we risk the lives of thousands of additional New Yorkers if we are not cautious. The lives of family members, friends, and neighbors depend on you. If you need a mask, please email me at [smayer@nysenate.gov](mailto:smayer@nysenate.gov) and my office will mail you a mask courtesy of the NYS Senate.

## **NEW YORK FORWARD**

- The Mid-Hudson Region and Westchester County entered Phase Four of reopening on Tuesday, July 7th. Phase Four includes Higher Education, Low-Risk Outdoor Arts & Entertainment, Low-Risk Indoor Arts & Entertainment, Media Production, and Professional Sports Competitions with No Fans. [Click here](#) for Phase Four industry guidance.
- The state will release guidance about [school reopening plans](#) on Monday, July 13th. Individual school districts must submit reopening plans for the district by Friday, July 31st. The state will make decisions about school districts reopening between August 1st and August 7th.
- Malls in regions that have entered Phase Four are allowed to reopen beginning on Friday, July 10th, contingent on their use of air conditioning filters with a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) 13, 12 or 11. [Click here](#) to read more about mall guidelines for reopening.

- A total of 19 states meet the metrics to necessitate a travel advisory requiring individuals who travel to New York from those states to quarantine for 14 days. The full list of states on the travel advisory are Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah.
- [Executive Order 202.48](#), issued on Monday, July 6th, extends for another month rules that allow restaurants and bars to serve alcohol in expanded outdoor seating like sidewalks and street parking lanes that have been converted to serve customers.

### **URGING THE PSC TO REJECT SUEZ WATER PROPOSED RATE INCREASES & MERGER**

I am glad to stand with the residents of Rye, Rye Brook, and Port Chester to ask the PSC to reject SUEZ Water's proposed rate increases and merger. Assemblymember Steven Otis and I sent a joint letter to John Rhodes, Chairperson of the Public Service Commission (PSC), urging the PSC to reject Suez Water's proposal.

The [letter](#) states:

*"In the midst of a pandemic with unprecedented economic fallout, we express even stronger concern, as originally expressed in our [August 2019 letter](#) , about the financial shock SUEZ's proposed rate increases and merger would have on Westchester communities. At this moment of incredible economic stress in the service area it would be inappropriate for the PSC to allow rates to rise. In addition, with this joint proposal, we ask the PSC to press for a more effective conservation program and expedited implementation of a plan to identify and meet the needs of low-income ratepayers."*

[Click here](#) to read the full letter. SUEZ Water's justification for the proposed rate increases is insufficient, particularly while area residents are dealing with the economic fallout of the Coronavirus Pandemic. SUEZ Water also fails to show any savings for ratepayers from the proposed merger. The proposed rate increases will have a detrimental impact on families & seniors living on fixed incomes, and small businesses in the community who have already had to make immense sacrifices due to the pandemic and cannot absorb the additional

expense that SUEZ Water seeks to impose on them.

### **DONATING 500 MASKS TO THE LARCHMONT MAMARONECK HUNGER TASK FORCE**

On Tuesday, July 7th, I donated 500 cloth masks courtesy of the NYS Senate to the Larchmont Mamaroneck Hunger Task Force (LMHTF). Thank you to President Michael Frouman and all of the Food Pantry volunteers for your tremendous work meeting the needs of the community during this challenging time. [Click here](#) to find out more about the LMHTF or to volunteer.

### **HAZARD PAY FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS**

Glad to stand with 1199 SEIU and NYSNA to support the fight for hazard pay for front-line healthcare workers at Westchester Medical Center. Healthcare workers have made immense sacrifices and put themselves & their families at risk during the Coronavirus Pandemic, and they deserve proper compensation for their contributions & sacrifices.

### **FOOD DRIVE FOR FRIENDS FROM YONKERS TO PORT CHESTER**

Thank you to Ms. Zafiro Acevedo, Club Morelenses, and all of the others for donations from Yonkers to Port Chester benefiting the Don Bosco Kitchen, Pantry & Closet. The Coronavirus Pandemic has put a great deal of strain on our local food pantries, and my Youth Advisory Council & staff member Perla Arellano have been working hard on Food Drives for Friends to collect donations for local food pantries during this time of need. Please email [arellano@nysenate.gov](mailto:arellano@nysenate.gov) to find out how to donate to your local food pantry.

## **REOPENING WESTCHESTER COUNTY**

This week, County Executive George Latimer and Consumer Protection Department Director Jim Maisano clarified rules regarding "COVID-19 Fees" at local businesses. The Consumer Protection Department wants Westchester residents to know that businesses are within their rights to add COVID-19 Fees to their transactions. These fees are not a local, county, or state tax, but a fee the business is adding for expenses it has incurred as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic. If the business decides to add a COVID-19 Fee, consumers must be notified at the point of sale, or the business must post signage clearly visible to consumers upon entrance, while shopping or ordering. Read more about the regulations regarding the COVID-19 Fee [here](#).

## **ELECTION INFORMATION GATHERING TASK FORCE**

Westchester County Board of Legislators Chairman Ben Boykin has established a new Election Information Gathering Task Force to obtain public input about the June 23 Primary Election in order to improve the experience for voters in the upcoming November 3rd General Election. The Task Force held a public input session on Wednesday, July 8th, that can be streamed [here](#). Voters can submit comments in writing about their experiences voting by absentee ballot, or voting early or on election day by emailing [BOLPublicComments@westchesterlegislators.com](mailto:BOLPublicComments@westchesterlegislators.com) or mailing the testimony to the Clerk of the Board of Legislators, 148 Martine Ave., 8th Floor, White Plains, NY 1060. The deadline to submit written comments is 5:00 PM. on July 15, 2020.

## **SUMMER SENIOR CONNECT PROGRAM FOR YONKERS SENIORS**

This week, Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano launched a "Summer Senior Connect" program to provide free activities for seniors 60 years and older to reduce stress, increase physical

health, and combat loneliness caused by the Coronavirus Pandemic. Senior residents of Yonkers must reserve their spot by calling (914) 377-6143. Classes will be offered from Tuesday, July 7th to Friday, August 28th at Coyne Park, Untermyer Park, and Redmond Field. [Click here](#) for a flyer with more information.

### **WESTCHESTER COUNTY RENT GUIDELINES BOARD APPROVES RENT FREEZE FOR LEASE RENEWALS**

The Westchester County Rent Guidelines Board, which decides the maximum rent increase landlords can impose on Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA) units in Westchester County, has approved a rent freeze for 1-year and 2-year lease renewals. This means that tenants in ETPA units in Westchester County cannot face a rent increase when renewing their leases between October 1, 2020 and September 30, 2021 for one or two year lease renewals. There are over 12,000 units in Westchester County that are protected by the ETPA. [Click here](#) to learn more about the Westchester County Rent Guidelines Board.

As always, feel free to contact my office at (914) 934-5250 or smayer@nysenate.gov if there is an issue with which we can offer assistance or if you have questions about reopening for yourself or your business.

Kind regards,  
Shelley B. Mayer  
State Senator  
37th District

**[Click here to read the full e-newsletter.](#)**