



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

## Bethlehem Road in Callicoon Center Finally Gets Wired for Broadband with Sen. Jen Metzger's Help

JEN METZGER October 25, 2020

| ISSUE: **COMPREHENSIVE BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY ACT, RURAL BROADBAND ACCESS, BROADBAND GAP**



**Callicoon Center, NY...**Senator Jen Metzger joined Bethlehem Road residents outside the home of Thierry Noyelle today to announce good news for the 23 homes stretched out along this rural road: Spectrum agreed to add the road to an existing buildout plan and has wired the road for broadband at no additional cost. Previously, residents were told it would cost \$30,000 to \$35,000 each to have service extended to their homes.

“Residents on this road had been trying to get broadband service for five years without success, and were in desperate straits when the pandemic hit. These are teachers, healthcare practitioners, and families with kids who were now learning remotely, all in need of a service they did not have,” **said Senator Jen Metzger**. “They contacted my office in April, and after much back and forth with Spectrum, the company agreed to wire this road with 23 homes for broadband. We were thrilled about the outcome, but we have many other gaps to close and I urge the Governor to sign my Comprehensive Broadband Connectivity Act, which passed the State Legislature with wide bipartisan support in July.”

**Bethlehem Road resident Patty Eggers said**, “Thanks to the teamwork on Bethlehem Road, and a pooling of talents, we got the job done. Without the support of Jen Metzger and [her Constituent Services Manager] Ari, I'm not so sure this would have happened. I hope every road in Sullivan County speaks up for the educational rights of our children, whether they are 2 or twenty-two, they need the support of our infrastructure.”

“Connectivity is crucial for all of us, but some of us are on the front lines. We have two working nurses, a teacher performing remote learning for several classes a day, a middle and high school principal managing 16 teachers, a school psychologist providing remote sessions, a physician conducting telemedicine and trauma calls. Add 20 houses to that and many kids doing distance learning, you have a crisis,” **said Bethlehem Road resident Derick Melander**. “But our only option was Spectrum, and they had repeatedly strung us along and turned us down. We tried everything, from coordinated calling, letters to local papers, meetings with the town government. Ultimately what made the difference was a call to Jen Metzger’s office.”

**Bethlehem Road resident Thierry Noyelle said**, “It is very sad that it took a pandemic for Spectrum to finally start meeting its obligations under its Time Warner Cable merger agreement with NYS. I fully agree with Senator Metzger that the way to address rural needs and improve competition with better quality services is to push for expanding alternative

technologies and new delivery models, like Sullivan County Government's efforts to roll out a 5G Home Wifi service in Sullivan County."

Earlier this summer, Metzger's bill ([S8805](#)) addressing deficiencies in rural broadband service across New York State passed the State Legislature nearly unanimously. (59-1 in the Senate and 141-0 in the Assembly.) The bill directs the Public Service Commission (PSC) to study the availability, affordability, and reliability of high-speed internet and broadband access in New York State and produce a detailed access map on its website that indicates internet service by location. The PSC is required to hold a minimum of four regional public hearings across the State and submit a report on its findings to the Governor and legislature within one year to prioritize broadband access for communities that have experienced negative economic and social impacts from insufficient service.

*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-S8805**

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- Introduced

- ○ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Vetoed By Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to the public service commission reviewing broadband and fiber optic services within the state

July 17, 2020

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Jen Metzger**

Do you support this bill?