



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

Senator Sean Ryan And Assemblymember Nily Rozic Host Broadband Roundtables In Adirondack Region

SEAN M. RYAN October 7, 2021

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ACCESS



SENATOR SEAN RYAN AND ASSEMBLYMEMBER NILY ROZIC HOST BROADBAND ROUNDTABLES IN ADIRONDACK REGION

*Legislators Representing Western New York And Queens Visit North
Country To Discuss Broadband Challenges With Local Stakeholders*

BUFFALO – This week, New York State Senator Sean Ryan and Assemblymember Nily Rozic hosted roundtables with local stakeholders in communities in New York’s North Country to discuss the challenges the region faces with broadband access. The roundtables were held at the Lewis County Courthouse in Lowville on October 4 and the Harriestown Town Hall in Saranac Lake on October 5. The legislators were joined by their colleagues in state government, Senator Dan Stec and Assemblymember Billy Jones, for the event in Saranac Lake.

Following introductions and a brief recap of the Office of the New York State Comptroller’s September report, [*Availability, Access and Affordability: Understanding Broadband Challenges in New York State*](#), panelists at both events partook in discussions highlighting the broadband challenges facing the North Country. The most prevalent theme was the scarcity of broadband access in rural areas that make up the majority of the region, and much of the discussion centered around the issues that emerge from that lack of access. Panelists from local library systems highlighted the difficult role that libraries have taken on to help fill broadband gaps, and representatives from St. Joseph’s Addiction Treatment & Recovery Centers explained that reliable broadband access can save the lives of those who use it for telemedicine services.

New York State does not currently have oversight over broadband service despite its evolution into a virtual necessity for participation in the economy, education, and civic life. Senator Ryan and Assemblymember Rozic explained how their bill authorizing the “NY broadband resiliency, public safety and quality act” ([S.5117/A.7412](#)) would help address many of the problems discussed during the roundtables. Its passage would affirm that access to high-speed broadband is essential and authorize the Public Service Commission to regulate broadband service as a utility in New York. Currently in committee, the bill already has robust bipartisan support, with 17 co-sponsors in the Senate and 15 co-sponsors in the Assembly.

Senator Sean Ryan said, “We know that in 2021, broadband internet has long since evolved from a luxury into an essential public good, just like water and electricity. As a result, people who don’t have reliable internet access face major struggles in their day-to-day lives. In urban areas, broadband challenges usually revolve around reliability and affordability. However, many rural communities have a complete lack of broadband access. This is especially prevalent in the North Country, where nearly two-thirds of households are located in rural settings. During these roundtables, we heard from the people directly affected by these challenges and we learned just how debilitating the effects can be. Their stories have only reaffirmed how important it is that we regulate broadband service as a utility in New York State to help ensure that all New Yorkers have reliable access to the high-speed internet that has become so important to our daily lives.”

Assemblymember Nily Rozic said, “High-speed, quality broadband availability and access are essential to New York’s economy, education, and civic life. New Yorkers deserve accountability and connectivity

when it comes to broadband, regardless of area code. These roundtables were a great opportunity to hear from experts and community members on the ground fighting for broadband access and discuss our legislation ensuring that the state can deliver for consumers across New York.”

A full list of panelists who participated in the roundtables is below:

- **Senator Sean Ryan** *†
- **Assemblymember Nily Rozic** *†
- **Senator Dan Stec** †
- **Assemblymember Billy Jones** †
- **Michael Lefebvre**, Office of the New York State Comptroller *†
- **Nick Hoh**, Communications Workers of America *
- **Dave Wolf**, Development Authority of the North Country *
- **Lindy Ellis**, Franklin County †
- **Ryan Piche**, Lewis County *
- **Meg Backus**, Northern New York Library Network †
- **Meghan Harney**, Lowville Free Library *
- **Zachary Randolph and Robin Gay**, St. Joseph’s Addiction Treatment & Recovery Centers †
- **David Wolff**, AdkAction †

* *Attended Oct. 4 roundtable in Lowville, NY*

† *Attended Oct. 5 roundtable in Saranac Lake, NY*

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2021-S5117

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Enacts the "NY broadband resiliency, public safety and quality act"

February 24, 2021

In Senate Committee [Energy and Telecommunications](#)

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Do you support this bill?