



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Senator Michelle Hinchey Announces Historic Funding for Upstate New York in Senate One-House Budget Proposal

MICHELLE HINCHEY March 16, 2022

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**ALBANY, NY** – Senator Michelle Hinchey today announced the details of the State Senate’s one-house budget proposal for the 2022-2023 fiscal year, which includes historic funding increases championed by the Senator for essential community needs as well as investment in a number of new funding areas that will benefit upstate and rural New Yorkers.

“The Senate’s historic one-house budget proposal shows what it looks like to have a strong

upstate voice in Albany, fighting to get equity for upstate needs and to bring transformational levels of investment to communities that have been left behind,” **said Senator Michelle Hinchey**. “In this resolution, we’ve proposed the largest-ever investment to address the upstate housing crisis and made good on our promise to continue the expansion of universal full-day pre-k to upstate communities. We’ve accelerated the middle-class tax cuts and given New Yorkers reprieve at the pump with the creation of a gas tax holiday. And we’re delivering record investments for local roads and broadband expansion, ensuring we have the infrastructure upstate New Yorkers and our small businesses need to thrive. Our Senate one-house sends a clear message that no matter where you live across New York State, we want you to see real, tangible impacts that will better your life for the future. As negotiations continue, I’ll be doing everything I can to make sure that all of these important elements, and more, are included in the final State Budget.”

Budget priorities that Senator Hinchey advocated for, which are part of the State Senate’s one-house budget proposal, include:

### **Suspending the State’s Gas Sales Tax & Delivering Middle Class Tax Relief**

Amid the ongoing Russian attack on Ukraine, U.S. gas prices have reached an all-time high, with upstate New Yorkers in largely motorist-centric communities bearing the brunt of skyrocketing prices at the pump. Senator Hinchey and her colleagues have put forth a plan in the 2022 Senate one-house budget to suspend New York State’s portion of the motor fuels and gas sales tax. If enacted, the plan would:

- **Suspend New York’s gas sales tax from May 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022 and allow local governments to do the same, keeping over \$600 million in the pockets of New Yorkers through the end of the year.**

Senator Hinchey and her colleagues have also included key proposals to lower the tax burden for New Yorkers including:

- **Accelerating the middle-class tax-cut program** so that families begin to see the full impact of the tax break in the 2023 tax year, rather than the 2025 tax year.
- **\$2.2 billion in property tax relief in the form of an increase to the STAR Property Tax Credit**, which would be delivered in a rebate check by October 31st of this year.

### **Expanding Education Funding, Universal Child Care & Pre-K into Upstate New York**

The Senate one-house makes historic investments in childcare, universal pre-k expansion, K-12 education and our public higher education institutions. Highlights include:

- **\$4.1 billion investment over four years to reform and expand access to affordable child care to more working and middle class New Yorkers across the state.**
- **\$250 million to continue the expansion of universal pre-K in upstate New York:** Last year, Senator Hinchey was a leading voice in the fight to expand pre-K programs to upstate New York for the first time, by successfully delivering a historic \$105 million. This funding continues that commitment for a full phase-in across upstate within the next two years.
- **\$1.795 billion to continue the three year phase-in of fully funding foundation aid for K-12 schools.**
- **\$600 million New Deal for SUNY:** This funding will increase year-to-year support for SUNY, including \$153 million for new full-time faculty, \$48.8 million to fully close the TAP Gap, restoring pre-pandemic community college funding, increasing adjunct pay, and eliminating student fees.

## **Increasing the Availability & Affordability of Upstate Housing**

Upstate is on the frontline of New York's housing crisis, and Senator Hinchey is leading the charge in the State Senate to secure the largest-ever housing investment targeted to upstate and rural communities to increase the supply of affordable homes for purchase and for rent. Due to Senator Hinchey's leadership, the Senate one-house proposes the following housing investments:

- **\$150 million in Statewide Capital Funding for the Housing our Neighbors with Dignity Program** to turn old hotels and motels across New York State into affordable rental housing.
- **\$51 million for the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation (AHC)** to create homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income families.
- **\$40 million for the Community Land Trust Revolving Acquisition Fund** to rehabilitate homes in need of repair and support first-time homeownership that stays affordable for the long term.
- **\$30 million for the Small Rental Development Initiative** to create small rental developments of fewer than 20 units to meet the needs of rural and upstate communities.
- **\$6.25 million for the Rural Preservation Program**, with a \$250,000 carveout for the Rural Preservation Coalition. The Rural Preservation Program provides support to community-based not-for-profit corporations known as Rural Preservation Companies (RPCs), which are the main conduit through which the state delivers safe, healthy, and affordable housing resources for families in rural and distressed areas, including mobile and manufactured home replacement, accessibility modifications, "Main Street" and downtown revitalization, septic and well upgrades, crime watch programs, legal assistance, and weatherization assistance.

- **\$2.4 million for the HOPE/RESTORE Program and \$2 million for the ACCESS to Home Program:** These programs provides financial resources to assist low-income senior citizen homeowners and people with disabilities with the cost of addressing emergency home needs and code violations that pose a threat to their health and safety or affect the livability of their home. Assistance for the cost of these critical repairs enables seniors and those with disabilities to continue to live independently.

### **Connecting All New Yorkers to Reliable Broadband**

Reliable broadband access is a necessity for every community and Senator Hinchey has been working to remove barriers that are stalling critically needed broadband projects across the state. The Senate's one-house plan includes:

- **Senator Hinchey's legislation (S7494) to fully repeal the Broadband Right-of-Way Fee**, which places unnecessary fees on telecommunications companies that are trying to build out broadband infrastructure across upstate New York.
- **\$1.45 billion for the Working to Implement Reliable and Equitable Deployment of Broadband Act (WIRED Broadband Act)** to help New York build out the last mile of internet service and close the digital divide. The WIRED Act would establish grant programs to support broadband deployment in unserved and underserved areas, assist municipalities with broadband projects, and increase access to affordable and reliable high-speed broadband across the State.

### **Expanding Key Local Programs**

- **\$100,000 to expand the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans' Peer Support Program to Greene County:** The Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer Support Program is a proven model of support that

saves lives and works to eliminate the stigma of mental health care by ensuring that veterans have local connections to the peer-to-peer services they deserve. The Senate's one-house budget proposal earmarks \$100,000 in first-time funding to expand this program into Greene County and continues to fund the program in Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Montgomery, Ulster, and Schenectady Counties.

- **Restoring \$200,000 for the Legal Services of Hudson Valley Veterans and Military Families Advocacy Project:** This unit works holistically to protect veterans and their family members from homelessness, address barriers to employment, and gain or preserve economic stability. Veterans with an honorable or general discharge are entitled to disability compensation, pension programs, free or low-cost medical care, and education support.
- **Expanding the SNUG Anti-Gun Violence Prevention Program to the City of Kingston:** The City of Kingston has experienced a significant increase in gun related violence over the past several years. The SNUG program is a community-based outreach program that treats gun violence as a public health issue, and has been implemented in neighboring cities such as Poughkeepsie and Newburgh. Due to Senator Hinchey's advocacy, the 2022 Senate one-house proposes \$50,000 to expand this gun violence reduction program into the City of Kingston for the first time.
- **Getting Equity for Belleayre Mountain Ski Center:** The Olympic Regional Development Authority funds and maintains the state-owned Belleayre ski resort alongside the Olympic Parks in the Adirondacks. This year, thanks to Senator Hinchey's advocacy, the Senate proposal includes \$6 million specifically for capital upgrades at Belleayre — nearly doubling the amount from last year.
- **An additional \$1 million championed by Senator Hinchey to expand the Capital District Transit Authority to Montgomery County:** Montgomery County currently does not have any regularly scheduled public transportation, despite being close to major hubs in the Cities

of Albany and Schenectady. The Senate one-house proposal includes a plan to expand service lines through the CDTA, which would service the rest of the Capital Region to Montgomery County and specifically to the City of Amsterdam.

- **\$500 million for dam safety and repair as part of the Environmental Bond Act**, which directs funding to restoration and flood risk reduction for climate adaptation projects. If passed by voters this fall, this funding could be used by the many private and publicly owned dams across upstate New York in critical condition.

### **Supporting New York's Small Businesses & Arts Organizations**

- **\$200 million for the Small Business Seed Funding Grant Program** to target support for early-stage businesses that were ineligible for many state and federal pandemic assistance programs. This grant program along with eligibility expansion under the Small Business Recovery Grant Program would help get our hardest-hit small businesses the level of state investment and support they deserve.
- **\$20 million, specifically for communities outside of New York City, through the New York State Council on the Arts Program**, to bolster support for small venues and arts organizations that missed out on key grant opportunities because of competition with their larger New York City counterparts.
- **\$2.6 million for the Minority and Women-Owned Business Development and Lending Program** to boost entrepreneurship and economic diversity across the state.

### **Boosting New York's Fight Against the Climate Crisis**

New York continues to lead the nation's fight against the climate crisis on all fronts, and the Senate's one-house budget proposal further exemplifies the state's commitment to pave the way toward a more sustainable future. Senator Hinchey is advocating for several

investments to protect New York's environment and advance our climate goals, including investments for the following initiatives:

- **\$400 million for the Environmental Protection Fund**, which directs record funding toward key programs that Senator Hinchey has championed, including a **\$13 million increase for the Climate Resilient Farming Fund, a direct result of Senator Hinchey's Soil Health and Climate Resiliency Act (S4722A)**.

Last year, Senator Hinchey secured first-time state funding to put the Catskill Park on par with the Adirondack Park through the stewardship line of the Environmental Protection Fund. This year, Senator Hinchey is fighting to increase funding for that line even further, and has proposed **\$10 million to support stewardship efforts across the Catskill Park and the Adirondack Park**.

- **\$6 billion for the Clean Water, Green Jobs, Green New York Environmental Bond Act**. This funding will be used to protect New York's communities and natural resources from the growing threat of climate change, which includes protecting clean drinking water, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing clean energy generation and green jobs, and enhancing the climate-resilience of New York's infrastructure. The Environmental Bond Act will be included on the November 2022 General Election ballot and must be approved by New York voters in order to be enacted.
- **Expanding Incentives for Home-based Renewable Energy** by providing new tax credits for geothermal systems of up to \$5,000 and increasing the existing credit for solar energy systems up to \$10,000 per household.
- **Improves on the Governor's proposed Advanced Building Codes, Appliance and Equipment Efficiency Standards, and Building Benchmarking Act of 2022**, by including language that a municipality may only issue a permit for new construction under seven stories that is an all-electric building by 2024, and may only issue a permit for new construction seven



stories or more that is an all-electric building by 2027.

### **Strengthening Upstate Healthcare & Supporting Healthcare Workers**

Upstate communities have seen a dramatic decline in healthcare services caused by decades of systemic underinvestment, and as the senator representing the most rural district in the Majority Conference, Senator Hinchey is championing key initiatives to secure better health equity for our region. The Senate's one-house plan includes:

- **\$625 million for Fair Pay for Home Care** to deliver higher compensation for home-based caregivers and ensure that high-quality home care is an option for all New Yorkers.
- **\$500 million Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) to help raise wages for human services workers, and providing \$120 million for a one-time bonus for health care and mental hygiene workers.**
- **\$1 million to support emergency medical services (EMS)** and update the definition of EMS for the first time in decades. The Senate's proposal also allows volunteer fire departments to recover costs for emergency medical services rendered — something that currently has to be recouped in local taxpayer-funded budgets.

### **Bolstering New York Agriculture and Expanding Farm-to-School**

As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Hinchey is fighting to deliver real support to New York's small family-owned farms, which are essential to New York's food security and represent a foundational component of our state's economy. Under Senator Hinchey's leadership, the Senate one-house budget seeks to restore all cuts proposed in the Executive Budget and allocates \$20 million in new capital funding for key agriculture programs. Highlights include:

- **Expanding New York’s Farm-to-School Program to include all school meals**, which would significantly increase incentives for schools to purchase directly from New York farms and connect more students to healthy, locally grown food.
- **\$10 million to provide financial opportunities for BIPOC farmers**, which would be split between grant funding to help new farmers get their businesses off the ground and grant funding to support seasoned BIPOC farmers already leading the way in the industry.
- **\$5 million for a Meat Processing Grant Program** to help expand and open new meat processing plants across New York State. This would make it easier for small cattle and pork farmers to process their products and get affordable, local meat into grocery stores, in turn, strengthening New York’s food supply chain and rural economies.

### **Fighting for Upstate’s Fair Share of Infrastructure Investments**

Senator Hinchey is strongly advocating for increased state investments to help local highway departments keep our heavily-traveled roads safe for New York drivers. The Senate budget proposal includes the following investments:

- **\$788.1 million in Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) funding (an increase of \$250 million).**
- **\$150 million for the Extreme Winter Recovery Program (an increase of \$50 million).**
- **An additional \$53.6 million for STOA (State Transportation Operating Assistance) funding to upstate transit systems** to provide a 36.42% increase in funding and achieve parity in funding with downstate transit systems.

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