



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## Hudson Valley Lawmakers' Bill to Bolster Funding to Combat Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Signed into Law

SUSAN SERINO July 22, 2022

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*Albany, NY* – Bipartisan legislation advanced by State Senators Pete Harckham and Sue Serino, along with Assemblymember Didi Barrett, that aims to bolster funding to more effectively combat the spread and better protect New Yorkers against tick-borne illness, has been signed into law by Governor Kathy Hochul.

Lyme and tick-borne diseases (TBDs) continue to plague thousands of New Yorkers each year. The newly enacted bill ([S6871A](#) / [A7400](#)), which takes effect immediately, creates a tax checkoff for Lyme and TBD education, research and prevention efforts, which would allow taxpayers to voluntarily contribute to a fund that would be dedicated to bolstering work in this field.

“The need for an increase in funding our fight against Lyme and other tick-borne diseases is greater than ever, and I thank my colleagues Senator Serino and Assemblymember Barrett for their resolute partnership on this issue,” said Harckham. “Now, residents will have an opportunity to join the fight against these diseases when they file their taxes.”

“With summer in full swing and New Yorkers spending more time outdoors, it is critically important to highlight the need to make substantive investments in research, education, and prevention initiatives to help stop the spread of Lyme and tick-borne diseases,” said Serino. “Not only will this bill give New Yorkers a chance to play an active role in this cause, it will help to raise critical awareness for this issue, and I sincerely thank Senator Harckham for his partnership in making the fight against Lyme and TBDs a real priority.”

“The Hudson Valley region continues to be the epicenter of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, making funding for education, prevention and research crucial to protect our families, neighbors and visitors about the complex, dangerous, and long-term impact of these diseases,” said Barrett. “This legislation will continue to shine the spotlight on the crisis of tick-borne illnesses, and I thank my Senate colleagues, Governor Hochul, and Lyme Disease advocates from across the state for their support of this bill.”

New York is home to the second highest number of confirmed Lyme disease cases in the nation. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that there are nearly a half million new cases of Lyme disease in the United States each year, which makes Lyme the third most

common bacterial infectious disease in America.

Due to inaccurate diagnostic testing, however, the actual number of cases remains elusive and is thought to be much higher. While cases of Lyme and TBDs used to be concentrated in and around the Hudson Valley and Long Island, in recent years the spread of Lyme and TBDs has become a significant statewide issue, with case numbers on the rise in nearly every region.

Despite the prominence of vector-borne diseases in the state and numbers rising across the country, funding for Lyme and TBD research has lagged at both the federal and state levels.