

*Senator Pam Helming*  
Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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## **HELMING & SUPERVISORS: ELIMINATION OF VLT FUNDS A THREAT TO ONTARIO COUNTY**

New York State Senator Pam Helming joined Chairman of the Ontario County Board of Supervisors Jack Marren and Farmington Town Supervisor Peter Ingalsbe to call on the Governor to restore VLT funding to the Town of Farmington and Ontario County. He has eliminated this funding in his executive budget. Currently, Ontario County and the Town of Farmington receive a portion of the proceeds of wagers placed on video lottery terminals (VLT) at Finger Lakes Racetrack. These funds are used to compensate for hosting the facility and have funded important infrastructure improvements that would otherwise be funded by raising property taxes.

“The loss of VLT funding would be devastating for taxpayers in the Town of Farmington and Ontario County. The Town of Farmington is growing in part because this important support has allowed them to invest in improving infrastructure and public safety. These funds help keep both town and county taxes stable. VLT funding has been in place now for at least a decade and was part of the original agreement when the state agreed to expand gaming to many racetracks across the state. The budget shouldn't be balanced by renegeing on longstanding agreements that help keep our local taxes town. The State of New York derives a great deal of revenue from gaming and it is only fair that local municipalities and host communities should see some of this funding to help with increased traffic and other infrastructure concerns. This is nothing more than a political ploy. Every area being affected by these cuts is in upstate New York. There is even a specific carve-out exempting Yonkers from these funding cuts. This is yet another example of the Downstate Democratic Majority looking out for themselves and it is inexcusable,” said Senator Pam Helming.

“It is unfortunate that the VLT funding to the Town of Farmington and Ontario County has been eliminated from the Governor's Executive budget without consideration of the overall impact. Support of gaming facilities in communities is often met with resistance from area residents and one of the incentives used to satisfy disapproval has always been the benefit of a portion of the proceeds from the Video Lottery Terminals. The funds are utilized for infrastructure improvements and help keep Town and County taxes down. Historically both the Town of Farmington and Ontario County have been under the Tax Cap annually, this loss of revenue jeopardizes this moving forward. I urge the Governor to reconsider terminating this funding stream and maintain the existing agreement,” said Jack Marren, Chairman of the Ontario County Board of Supervisors.

“The Governor’s proposal for eliminating Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) Aid to 15 different municipalities, including 8 counties, while leaving VLT Aid to Yonkers is both incomprehensible and devastating to all affected. The ongoing impacts for local services, that have been and will continue to be provided by municipal and county governments, and which are attributed to the State’s VLT Program will continue to remain for the 15 different municipalities affected. In Farmington over the past two years we have allocated \$2.8 million for our parks and we have used \$800,000 for our highway projects. The State Legislature is asked to not discriminate their decision in the same irrational manner as the governor is proposing. Instead, the State Legislature is requested to realize the ongoing obligations that were created by the State of New York when it initiated the VLT Program,” said Peter Ingalsbe, Farmington Town Supervisor.

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