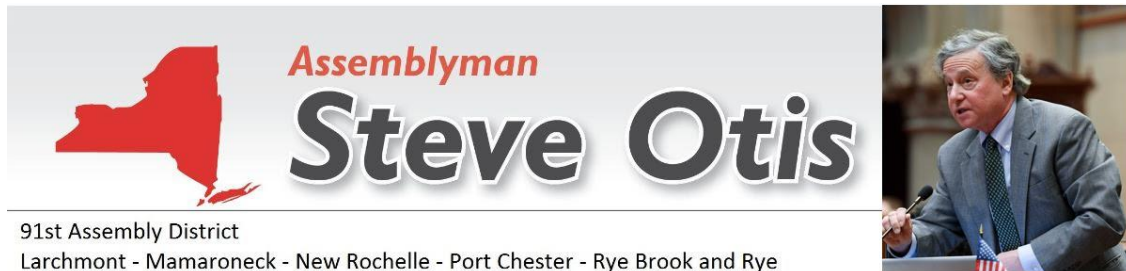


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Voters Approve Environmental Bond Act by Wide Margin

The Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Bond Act was overwhelmingly approved on election day with the unofficial tally showing 59.2% of the voters supported the proposition voting yes with 28.7% opposing it with a no vote.

Forty out of sixty-two counties supported the proposal, with the highest percentages of support coming from voters in Manhattan, Tompkins County, Bronx, Queens, Westchester, Ulster, Brooklyn and Albany County.

Approval of the \$4.2 Bond Act will support additional capital funding for existing and new state programs to support projects in key categories outlined in the proposal.

- \$1.1 billion for restoration and flood risk reduction
- \$650 million for open space land conservation and recreational projects
- \$1.5 billion for climate change mitigation projects
- \$650 million for water quality improvement projects

Of special importance for Westchester will be funding for flood resiliency projects, clean water and a variety of grants that will be available to local governments and school districts. Electric school buses and electric vehicle charging infrastructure will receive support to match the growth in availability of these vehicles in upcoming years.

Many Westchester census tracts have already been identified as environmental justice areas. The bond act includes priority funding for neglected areas that have the greatest need to correct existing water and air quality pollution.

The water quality improvement category provides benefits on issue that I have worked on for many years. The Bond Act will provide additional funding for the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act grant program I helped initiate in 2015. With the recent announcement of WIIA grants, Westchester projects have now been awarded over \$60 million in state grants from this program. The new bond act funding will further reduce the cost local taxpayers have to shoulder for these clean water projects.

The bond act also includes the creation of a new stormwater grant program, a proposal I initiated and was able to have added to the bond act. Flooding from Hurricane Ida highlighted the need to rebuild or upgrade municipal stormwater systems. State assistance is the only way to make these improvements affordable at the local level.

Environmental bond acts have historically been passed every decade with the most recent propositions approved by voters in 1966, 1972, 1986 and 1996. The gap in years since 1996 underscored the need for new capital funding for environmental projects.

This fall I worked to spread information about the Bond Act and support passage. Through panel discussions, podcasts and a statewide environmental conference the feedback I received was even more information about the need for state assistance to address pressing environmental issues. The bond act was also supported by local officials, labor organizations, environmental groups, civic organizations and business groups. The strong support of the voters reaffirmed that message.

Environmental bond act funds are not awarded all at once. They will be appropriated over a number of years. I know that there will be opportunities to combine these state funds with federal programs that support some of the same program categories included in the bond act. As I have in the past, I will work closely with state agencies and local applicants to make sure that the Sound Shore and Westchester are able to take full advantage of these new funding opportunities.

