



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **September 19, 2017** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Legislature Urges Passage of New Federal “Dream Act”

The Tompkins County Legislature, without dissent, urged the United States Congress to pass the new bipartisan-supported “Dream Act of 2017,” to prevent the revocation of legal status from immigrant youth protected under the five-year-old Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program—an action it states will “strengthen the fabric of our economy and country.” Earlier this month, President Trump ordered an end to the DACA program that shields young undocumented immigrants from deportation. The “Dream Act of 2017,” introduced by a bipartisan group of Senators including New York’s Chuck Schumer, would establish a road to lawful permanent resident status or U.S. citizenship for about 800,000 registered DACA individuals.

Legislator Anna Kelles, who drafted the resolution, noted that she doesn’t typically like the Legislature to pass a lot of resolutions urging action on national issues, but in this case felt this very important. Ms. Kelles said she’s hoping Tompkins County’s support, when combined with those of other local governments, will create a push for action at the national level.

Legislator Mike Sigler, who cautioned that he doesn’t typically like to take positions on national issues, said he nonetheless supports this one. Not generally supportive of executive orders, Sigler said he believes this issue is a problem that needs to be taken care of, and to be taken care of by Congress. While he not knowing complete details concerning the proposed new federal legislation, he said he sees it as a positive first step that Congress can take to address the issue.

Contact: Dan Klein, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 272-7582; Legislator Anna Kelles, 342-2036.

Legislature Supports NYSEG Petition for Lansing Compressor Project, Urges Expeditious PSC Review

The Legislature went on record in unanimous support of a New York State Electric and Gas petition to the State Public Service Commission (PSC) requesting permission to construct a pressure-boosting compressor station project to address safety, pressure, and reliability issues for current natural gas customers in the Lansing area. The Legislature urges expeditious review and approval of the petition by the PSC.

The project proposes four skid-mounted “pressure booster” compressor units, placed strategically within the existing gas distribution system, to elevate system pressures in the Lansing area during times of peak gas demand. The measure states that the project is in the public interest, as the pressure boosters will improve system reliability; better allow for the safe and continued uninterrupted supply of gas service to existing customers in the Lansing area, and help return pressure in the distribution system to optimal operating pressures. It notes that NYSEG would like to have the pressure boosters in place for most of the 2018-19 heating season, and that schedule could be implemented if the PSC grants timely approval.

The resolution pledges that Tompkins County will assist NYSEG, as requested, in planning for the pressure boosters and facilitating communication between NYSEG and the public.

Legislator Martha Robertson, who advanced the member-filed resolution, recalled that the proposed initiative now before the PSC arose from discussions with the utility stemming from work of the County’s Energy and

Economic Development Task Force. “With quick approval, people could have this in place by December 2018,” Robertson said. “Our voice in support of this filing and this petition will certainly be helpful in persuading them to move ahead.” The member-filed approach was necessary due to a lack of time to get the matter through the Legislature’s committee process and still meet the PSC’s September 25th comment deadline.

Lansing Legislator Mike Sigler also spoke in support of the compressor project. “NYSEG has dragged its feet for years now...and has put my constituents in jeopardy,” he said. “The fact that NYSEG has done this is unacceptable. This is simply to boost the pressure and it’s a safety measure that is important.”

Contact: Legislator Martha Robertson, 592-3119; Legislator Mike Sigler, 339-7978.

Legislators Thank Departing Colleague Peter Stein for Dedicated Service

The Legislature bid a fond farewell to Legislator Peter Stein, who last week announced he will resign from the Legislature effective September 22, since he is moving out of District 11 (Town of Ithaca), which he represents.

Calling it a “bittersweet moment,” Legislature Chair Michael Lane thanked Mr. Stein for his service. “You’ve been a terrific member of this board,” he said. “You’ve taught us a different way to think about things...how to apply the scientific method to some of the things we do, and that’s been good for us. You’re a teacher and an educator, and I think that is very important. We are sorry to lose you on the County Legislature, but we wish you the best for the future,” Mr. Lane said.

The District 11 seat will remain vacant until after November’s general election. According to provisions of the County Charter, in the event of a vacancy that occurs September 20 or later in the last year of a Legislator’s elected term, the winner of the general election for the office will fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Contact: Michael Lane, Chair of the Legislature, 274-5434 or 844-8440; Legislator Peter Stein, 266-7579.

Among other business, the Legislature

- Scheduled Monday, October 30, at 7:00 p.m. as the date of the Public Hearing on the 2018 Tompkins County Budget and five-year Capital Program. The hearing will be held at Legislature Chambers at the Governor Daniel D. Tompkins Building, 121 E. Court Street (second floor), Ithaca. The Legislature’s vote on the budget is expected at its meeting of November 9.
- Accepted a \$25,000 grant from the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York to the Office for the Aging under the Foundation’s “Aging by Design” grant program.
- Authorized the County to apply for more than \$1.4 million in awarded New York State Public Transportation Modernization & Enhancement Program funding on behalf of Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT). The funding will fully reimburse TCAT in capital costs for such projects as facility rehabilitation, bus capital maintenance, replacement of bus maintenance lifts replacement, bus shelter upgrades, and a bus traffic signal prioritization system.

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