



## Rockland County Legislator Alden H. Wolfe

### Sixth Legislative District Update: Fall 2014

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Dear Neighbors,

I'm sending this newsletter to update you on matters that concern our neighborhoods in the Sixth Legislative District, which includes parts of Montebello, Suffern and Monsey. As you will read, I've worked hard to establish a task force on water resources to help address our rising water bills, which is unsustainable for middle class families.

Everyone asks about the County's financial outlook. I'm optimistic that we will continue to see our situation improve, thanks to our improved credit rating and increased projected revenues. The Budget & Finance committee will be reviewing the 2015 proposed budget over the next few weeks, and I encourage everyone to come and become better informed about the budget process. For a schedule of review sessions, please call (845) 638-5100.

As many of you know I was chosen to be the Chair of the Legislature in January. In that role, I've been traveling around the county visiting many community organizations. With so many outstanding, vital organizations, we have a lot to be proud of. As the legislative liaison to Volunteer Counseling Services (VCS), I see their important work firsthand including offering mental health services to the uninsured and under-insured. I recently spent an afternoon touring the Center for Safety and Change, which just marked 35 years of providing life-saving services to victims of domestic violence. So many effective organizations in the Sixth Legislative District and the county tackle problems from fighting hunger and poverty to stimulating economic development. Please let me know if there is a group in your area that you would like me to visit.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you. It is my honor to represent all of you.

Yours truly,  
Alden H. Wolfe

### Wolfe Secures Funds for Montebello Bridge Replacement

On April 1<sup>st</sup> the Rockland County Legislature unanimously authorized \$1,740,000 in additional funding for the bridge to be rebuilt over the Mahwah River at the Montebello and Lake Road intersection. This was in addition to the \$2,500,000 that the Legislature had previously authorized.

Wolfe said, "I'm happy that we authorized funding for this project because the people who live and work in Suffern, Montebello and the surrounding communities have put up with this inconvenience for far too long."

With site preparation completed, construction is well underway. Slightly wider than the original, the replacement bridge will preserve the historic character of the area with its similar stone face, pillars and capstones.

Wolfe said, "The engineering of the new bridge will make it far more resistant to extreme weather events such as the hurricane that destroyed the original bridge. After way too many delays, I am happy to be able to fast-track the next phases of the project to avoid further holdups. I will continue to monitor the project closely to make sure that the work progresses as quickly as possible."



Alden Wolfe gets briefed on progress of the bridge reconstruction

**I've contacted the County Highway Department in response to calls from those who live near the bridge about noise in the evening and on weekends. I'm following up to see that your concerns are resolved.**

## Wolfe Demands Safer Oil Trains To Protect Our Lives and Our Drinking Water

Due to an astronomical increase in the hauling of crude oil and other highly toxic materials, Rockland is at risk for the same oil spill accidents that are plaguing communities throughout the US and Canada. The majority of tanker cars, known as DOT 111's, are outdated and break apart in crashes, resulting in catastrophic leaks. Large sections of track run through Rockland, some sections within 50 feet of Lake DeForest and the Hackensack River, major drinking water sources for Rockland and Bergen Counties.

"With homes, schools, and a major water supply within a few hundred feet of the track, an oil spill or fire could devastate Rockland," said Wolfe. "The US Department of Transportation (USDOT) should make stricter rules and keep our first responders better informed about the hazardous substances that the trains are carrying."

The USDOT, which oversees railroads, asked for comments on its new



Alden Wolfe joins Rep. Nita Lowey and Hon. Harriet Cornell at press conference

rules. Wolfe told them to get rid of the DOT 111s, to require slower speeds in highly populated areas and to make stricter rules to help first responders. An accident is a real threat for Rockland; just last year a truck collided with a CSX train in West Nyack, and this October, another

truck crashed into a train near West Point.

"Luckily there was no oil in the tankers, but we can't leave this to chance. We need stricter rules now," said Wolfe.

### Wolfe Forms Task Force to Plan Rockland's Water Future

The Task Force on Water Resources Management was approved by a unanimous vote of the Legislature. Its purpose is to study and recommend ways for Rockland to manage its water resources more sensibly. The timing couldn't have been better. In May, a Public Service Commission (PSC) report said that Rockland faced no danger of a prolonged water shortage in the near future.

"Science is on our side," said Wolfe. "Research shows that Rockland won't need a large water supply source for at least ten years--if ever. What United Water proposes will raise our rates \$500 per home in the first year alone; we already pay among the highest water rates in the United States. I've asked the PSC to require United Water to work with us to find an affordable plan. The current increases are not sustainable."

Wolfe added, "Hats off to the Rockland Water Coalition for finding experts who have shown us the truth about our water needs. I'm optimistic that the task force will get this right. The public is welcome to attend all meetings."



Alden Wolfe, at first meeting of Task Force with Task Force Chair Harriet Cornell

### Charter Reform Referendum on November Ballot

On Election Day, November 4th, Rockland voters will have the opportunity to update the way our government works. If adopted, the Charter reform would give the Legislature more time to review the annual budget, place checks on the Executive's ability to create temporary positions and prohibit department heads from having outside employment, among other changes.

"It's important that the public takes the opportunity to have a say in the matter of Charter reform in November. I urge everyone to cast a vote in this referendum," said Wolfe.

You can see the proposed law as it will appear on the ballot at the County Legislature's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/rockleg>.

**Please Like Us On Facebook!**

## Destination Rockland: Wolfe Wants Tourist Dollars in the County

On June 30th, Alden Wolfe hosted a workshop to listen to leading experts in tourism, transit and outdoor recreation on how to attract tourists to Rockland's outstanding parks for hiking and biking. Wolfe is already working with Suffern leaders to attract Harriman visitors to Suffern's array of restaurants.

"We've seen hikers east of the Hudson bring millions of dollars a year into local economies. We can capture that market here. Rockland's natural attractions are unparalleled in our region, and our villages offer outstanding amenities."



**Above:** Wolfe listens to Rockland County Transportation expert Michael Prendergast explain bus connections to Rockland parks  
**Right:** Wolfe at post workshop follow up with a plan for Suffern with Deputy Mayor Jo Meegan-Corrigan and Patsy Wooters of the Suffern Downtown Task Force  
**Left:** The pristine lake at Pine Meadow.



## Ramapo Deserves Full Cleanup of Toxic Sites

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) has issued its proposals for cleaning significant toxic waste at two sites in our area:

1. Coal tar from a manufactured gas plant in Suffern.
2. Paint sludge dumped by Ford throughout several locations in the Hillburn/Sloatsburg area.

"I've asked the NYSDEC to literally leave no stone unturned in cleaning up all hazardous waste, regardless of cost," said Wolfe. "There should be no financial limits when it comes to safe drinking water or soil that is free of deadly contaminants."

"I recommended that the DEC get rid of every bit of sludge, with no capping and no fill that has come from a previously remediated site. Concerning the gas plant, I have insisted that we receive regular readings from the nearby well house to avoid any possible contamination."

### Chief Perry of the Ramapough Lenape Nation Weighs In

"Many people who lived and hunted on or near this toxic site suffered fatal or debilitating cancers. There was no warning posted on these lands; no one knew about the dumping. Most but not all of those victims are members of the Ramapough Lenape Nation."

"My heart goes out to every single family who has endured severe sickness or loss of a loved one. For their sake we must have a transparent study to look at the links between exposure to these deadly toxins left by Ford and the high incidence of cancer."

*(Dwaine Perry, Chief of the Ramapough Lenape Nation)*

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**If you have any questions about toxic site cleanup, please contact Wendy Rosenbach at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 3, at (845) 256-3018.**

## Wolfe Votes No on Tuxedo Ridge Sewer Hook-Up to our Hillburn Plant

Chairman Wolfe stated that the multi-million dollar development planned in the Orange County town of Tuxedo should have no access to our Hillburn Wastewater Treatment Plant, regardless of what a Tuxedo developer offers to pay Rockland because according to Wolfe, "Ramapo, Clarkstown and a few isolated users in Orangetown foot the whole bill for this facility. The County shouldn't take away revenues that belong to residents of the Sewer District."

Equally important this project, along with the proposed but not yet approved casinos, will draw over a million gallons of water a day from the Ramapo River, reducing Rockland's available water supply.

"I don't believe that my neighbors who paid for the sewer plant want the County's general fund to get a generous donation for a facility that belongs to them," said Wolfe. "I'm pleased that the Legislature rejected it."

## Fighting Hunger with Tomche Shabbos

Recently I joined volunteers at Tomche Shabbos to fill boxes of food for struggling families in our community. An organization dedicated to fighting hunger in Rockland, Tomche Shabbos offers other programs as well including job skills training. Services are available to everyone in Rockland regardless of race, creed or nationality.

It was inspiring to join with so many dedicated volunteers to help Tomche Shabbos with its weekly food distribution. Every hunger-fighting organization in the county agrees that hunger plagues all too many Rocklanders and affects people in every community in Rockland. During the coming year, I will be focusing on hunger in our county because no one should ever worry about having enough to eat.



**Left:** Wolfe and Josh Feiner listen to Tomche Shabbos Director Alan Rosenstock discuss the organizations mission

**Right:** Wolfe joins volunteers in getting food boxes for delivery

## Alden Wolfe and NAACP Chair Frances Pratt at West Street Childcare Graduation Ceremony.

*It was a joy to share this milestone with the graduates and their families. Quality childcare is the cornerstone of an excellent education.*



## Wolfe Tells State: Don't Let Rockland's Needs Fall Through the Cracks in Casino Pick

The State Gaming Commission is close to the final selection of who will receive a license for upstate gambling casinos.

Two of those locations—Woodbury and Sterling Forest—are a stone's throw from Rockland's borders, but Alden Wolfe pointed out that Rockland's interests were not part of the environmental review process for either location, even though each potential site would impact Rockland's air and water quality, emergency and police departments, roads and traffic.

"Most importantly," said Wolfe, "Both sites would threaten the quali-

ty and quantity of water from the Ramapo River that we depend on for drinking in our homes, workplaces and schools."

Wolfe asked the State Gaming Commission, "Who is looking out for Rockland's interests in this process? Rockland's water supply is hit on both sides. The permit for our reservoir, Lake Deforest, requires that we send 7 million gallons a day to New Jersey—and we could lose as much as one million gallons per day from the Ramapo River to these potential Orange County casinos. No decision should be made without considering Rockland County's health and safety."

**I always appreciate your comments or suggestions.**

**Feel free to call my office at (845) 638-5773, or e-mail me at [Wolfea@co.rockland.ny.us](mailto:Wolfea@co.rockland.ny.us)**