

# The Legislature of Rockland County



**ALDEN H. WOLFE**  
**Chairman**

February 2015

Dear Neighbor,

As I head into my second year as Chairman of the Rockland County Legislature, I'm happy to report that District 6 and Rockland as a whole made significant gains in 2014. For sure, this is no time for complacency. Challenges remain, but our County is closer to eliminating its accumulated deficit than ever before. While working to restore the County's fiscal health remains my top priority, it's important to acknowledge the progress we've made in several areas:

Water Supply In 2014, we pulled off something that no one ever thought possible -- we halted plans for United Water's desalination plant. The Public Service Commission's ruling on Rockland's water needs was a landmark decision, a David v. Goliath victory that placed the needs of ratepayers above corporate profits. I'm honored to have been a part of this process, which continued with the creation of the Rockland County Task Force on Water Resource Management. Now, instead of a high-priced desal plant that would have doubled our water rates, we have a role in determining our water future, and hopefully a means to control rates.

Charter reform In November, a decisive majority of voters approved reforms to our County Charter, bringing greater efficiency to the way that County government runs. I'm particularly happy with the earlier budget submission date, which will give us much needed additional time to perform our due diligence.

2015 Budget I'm gratified that a true bi-partisan coalition of Legislators was able to preserve funding for the agencies that provide essential support to so many Rocklanders. Study after study has found that it costs less for contract agencies to provide services to the hungry, the disabled, the dying, the disadvantaged and the victimized. At the same time, the Sheriff's Department centralizes many services that are available to first responders across the County, at a savings to town and village taxpayers. In the Legislature, Republicans and Democrats alike said no to tax shifting, gambling with our public safety and balancing our budget on the backs of our neediest.

What's in store for 2015? Here's my to-do list for the year ahead:

### Economic Development

- Continuing my partnership with the Rockland Economic Development Corporation to attract good businesses and new jobs to Rockland County. In our Legislative District alone, we've welcomed Raymour & Flanigan and have seen the successful rebranding of the Crowne Plaza.
- Building on the transit and tourism workshop I held in June-- I've already met several times with officials in Suffern to develop strategies to draw tourists to our top-notch parks, shops, and restaurants.

### Local Infrastructure

- Continuing to monitor the progress of the Montebello Bridge rebuild. Living without this bridge has been an enormous inconvenience as well as a significant safety concern. I'll keep pressing for its completion to be as soon as possible.
- Remaining a strong advocate for flood remediation efforts in areas along the Mahwah and Ramapo Rivers and ensuring that the County takes a more active role in seeking solutions.

### Public Health and Safety

- Keeping the pressure on the US Department of Transportation for higher safety standards on the CSX railroad line, where oil tankers come within 100 feet of our water supply. An explosion could devastate our drinking water and cause chaos across the County.
- Collaborating with Volunteer Counseling Service to bring our community together in order to address incidents of hate through a program called Not in Our Town.
- Focusing on food insecurity and food waste because I've seen too many families struggle to put food on the table. In a county where so many prosper, this is unacceptable. We're fortunate to have outstanding agencies that are lifelines for these families. I've seen their unparalleled work firsthand, and I'll do all I can to support their efforts.

As Rockland's fiscal condition continues to improve, now is the time to be positive about our County because Rockland is poised to succeed. I'm optimistic that the Legislative and Executive branches will collaborate on many shared goals including deficit reduction, closing on the sale of the Summit Park Hospital, keeping down tolls on the new Tappan Zee Bridge and better mass transit funding. Above all, it's participation from people like you that makes the difference. For example, last year I was able to get a State road repaired based on your phone calls, so please stay in touch. My door is always open; you can email me at [wolfea@co.rockland.ny.us](mailto:wolfea@co.rockland.ny.us) or call at 845-638-5100. I look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A Wolfe', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alden H. Wolfe