



Assemblymember

**Anna Kelles**

Assembly District 125



April 16, 2024

Dear Neighbors,

As we all recover from the Tax Day deadline, it's timely to remember that the New York State budget is our State taxes at work. The Governor and the Legislature are tasked with not only being stewards of taxpayer funds but also enacting tax policy to ensure a fair tax structure and to generate the necessary revenue to address the needs of our State. We are still at work in the final days of negotiation (yes, they are still ongoing), and I am continuing to fight for healthcare and wellness, education, labor rights, housing, the environment and more. Each moment matters! Over the next few weeks, I will be sharing the results of these deliberations to help shed light on the final outcome of this long process!

## Legislative Update

### **Advocating for Governor Hochul to Sign CO2 Fracking Ban into Law**

I joined Senator Lea Webb, Dr. Sandra Steingraber, and environmental advocates from Frack Action and the Sierra Club to [deliver a letter](#) to Governor Hochul signed by 115 organizations advocating to swiftly sign the carbon dioxide fracking ban bill ([A8866](#)/[S8357](#)) into law. Both the Assembly and Senate passed the bills in record time with bipartisan support. The

legislation is simple and prevents the gas industry from circumventing the state's existing ban on fracking by using a highly experimental carbon dioxide medium instead of water to frack for methane gas. No matter what substance is used to extract gas and oil using the fracking process, it is still fracking for oil and gas. It will still have severe negative health and environmental consequences exacerbated by the use of a highly corrosive substance that is known to cause pipeline ruptures and destabilization through acidification and demineralization of the very ground under our feet. This bill is closing a loophole in our state's fracking ban to protect our people, our environment, and our economy, and I look forward to the Governor quickly signing the bill into law.



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**NYS Textile Legislation Workshop in the Workshops Event**



I had the pleasure of being the keynote presenter at the [NYS Textile Legislation Workshop in the Workshops event](#) this week in New York City which focused on two bills that I am championing: [the Fashion Act \(A4333\)](#) and the Extender Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Textiles bill ([A8078](#)). The day was an opportunity to engage with brands, retailers, and textile industry professionals to break down the structure of the bills and the impact that they will have on the industry and all stakeholders. We discussed the potential to create new industries as well as significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions globally and water pollution, and reduce child and slave labor globally. It was an incredibly engaged group with hours of questions about the legislative process and progress of the bills.

I, along with many of my legislative colleagues, have been advocating for extender producer responsibility (EPR) for product packaging ([A5322B](#)), but we need to view all products in a similar way, including textiles. EPR is an approach that holds manufacturers and producers responsible for the life

cycle of their products, including post-consumer disposal. EPR programs shift the financial costs of disposing of such products from municipalities onto the manufacturers and producers, while incentivizing the manufacturers to design products that are easier to reuse, recycle or dispose of safely. According to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), almost 1.4 billion pounds of clothing and textiles are discarded every year in New York State, about 69 pounds per resident, and it is one of the fastest growing waste streams. As our landfills continue to fill up and have limited years of additional capacity, we need to ensure that the majority of these materials are reused or recycled, which would also provide social, environmental and economic benefits.



## Rally for Solidarity with Immigrants

We are currently witnessing alarming anti-immigrant and racist rhetoric as well as harmful attacks against our immigrant communities in NY. I joined a rally with legislative colleagues and organizations to advocate for a strong legislative package that would ensure greater protections and opportunities for our immigrant communities to integrate into our communities, with safety and economic engagement as core priorities. The “[New York for All Act](#),” the “[Dignity Not Detention Act](#),” and the “[Access to Representation Act](#)” are not just pieces of legislation; they are beacons of hope, ensuring that every individual is treated with respect and afforded their inherent rights. We know many immigrant New Yorkers and their families carry the anxiety of possibly having their family split up simply from living their daily lives in the open – interacting with the government, attending school, going to work, or visiting a public hospital for care. The New York for All Act would reduce these concerns by broadly prohibiting state and local officers from enforcing federal immigration laws, funneling people into ICE custody, and sharing sensitive information with federal immigration authorities. As a state, New York has the power to create a physical and psychologically safer environment for all immigrant New Yorkers. Watch a [video of my comments](#) from the rally.

## Around the District

### **Recent Rainfall, Rising Water Levels and Canal Management**

Significant rainfall throughout the region recently is impacting the water level of Cayuga Lake. [New York State Canal Corporation](#) has been monitoring the water levels closely, and on Sunday, April 14 activated its High Flow Management Plan for the Oswego River Basin in Central NY.

The Canal Corporation stated, “Some localized areas along the Canal system may experience seasonally and sustained high water levels during this time. As one of many water managers across the Oswego River Basin, the Canal Corporation is managing its infrastructure in a way that most efficiently moves water through the Canal system given current conditions and forecasted precipitation. The Canal Corporation is also monitoring and taking into account the Clyde River and other tributaries that contribute to the high water levels when making operational decisions.”

For more information and background, you can read a brief overview of the Cayuga Lake water management on the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network website\_or watch this 2022 presentation on “[Cayuga Lake Water Levels: Inflows, Outflows and What You Need to Know.](#)”

## **Lansing Fire Department Recruitment**

Volunteer fire departments across New York State have been faced with decreased membership and increased call volume. I was grateful for the opportunity to visit with the Lansing Fire Department at their Open House event, part of the annual RecruitNY statewide initiative to raise public awareness of the service to the community and highlight the rewards of being a member of a volunteer fire department. Interested in joining the department? Visit the Lansing Fire Department website or call their non-emergency phone at 607-533-4203. Live outside of Lansing? Contact your local fire department to learn more about volunteering.



# Community Resources

**Donate Eclipse Glasses for Reuse**

Want to spare your gently used eclipse glasses from the landfill? [Eclipse Glasses USA](#) collects donated solar eclipse glasses to send around the world for others to enjoy upcoming eclipses and primarily benefits schools and children. Glasses must have no scratches, punctures, tears, or any other form of damage that might compromise the protective quality of the glasses. Ship to: Eclipse Glasses USA, LLC, P.O. Box 50571, Provo, UT 84605



### **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Week of Action**

The White House and the U.S. Department of Education have announced a FAFSA Week of Action for April 15-19 to encourage more students and families to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Did you know that last year, NY high school students left over \$200 million in federal aid unclaimed by not filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)? The FAFSA is free, and opens the door to federal and state aid and other scholarships to help pay for college. However, this spring FAFSA

completion rates are down more than 30% compared to this time last year. Upcoming virtual assistance events and on demand services can be found on the [NYS Higher Education Services Corporation \(HESC\) website](#). Students who do not meet U.S. residency requirements for FAFSA may be eligible for New York's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) through the [DREAM Act](#).



**New Yorkers left  
\$200 million in federal  
college aid unclaimed  
last year by not filling  
out the FAFSA.**

**Complete the FAFSA.**

[hesc.ny.gov/FAFSAready](https://hesc.ny.gov/FAFSAready)

SUNY

**Am I Eligible for Benefits?**

As budgets are stretched to pay for housing, food and utilities, it may be helpful to see if you would qualify for assistance if you are not already receiving benefits. The [New York State myBenefits website](#) has a [prescreening tool](#) that provides a quick and easy way for people who live in NY to find out if they are eligible to receive help with buying food (SNAP or WIC), home energy assistance (HEAP), special tax credits, or health insurance. The pre-screening will take approximately 10 minutes to complete, and the information is private and secure. For more information or to apply for benefits, you can connect with the Department of Social Services in [Tompkins](#) or [Cortland](#) County.



## AM I ELIGIBLE?

Prescreen for Programs you may be eligible for

HEAP

SNAP

Assistance Programs

Health Insurance

Tax Credits

## **Blood Donors Needed**

*From the American Red Cross:* Over the last 20 years, the number of people donating blood to the Red Cross has fallen by more than 40%. We need NEW blood donors. Please help meet the need for blood. Presenting donors will get a \$10 egift card. To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-733-2767 or visit [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) and enter the zip code of the area you would like to donate to see options.

Upcoming blood drives in the area:

- 4/17 First Unitarian Society of Ithaca, 10 AM – 3 PM
- 4/18 Lansing United Methodist Church, 12 – 5 PM
- 4/22 Tompkins County Public Library, 10 AM – 3 PM
- 4/24 Dryden Fire Department, 12 – 5 PM
- 4/25 First Congregational Church of Ithaca, 1:30 PM – 6:30 PM
- 4/27 Trinity Lutheran Church, 10 AM – 2 PM
- 4/30 Vineyard Church of Ithaca, 10 AM – 3 PM



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In good health,

*Aimee R. Keller*

Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

Assemblymember, 125th A.D.

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