



ASSEMBLYMAN **Fred W. Thiele, Jr.**



Reports to the People

Fall 2021

2021 LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

The 2021 Legislative Session brought forth many accomplishments for the 1st Assembly District. I was proud to have 29 of my prime sponsored bills pass through both Houses of the State Legislature. That is the third highest of the 150-member Assembly.

Highlights of my local priorities that were signed into law in 2021:

HONORING FALLEN STATE TROOPERS



State Trooper
Jose A. Rosado



State Trooper
Donald A. Strand

Photo credit: New York State Police Wall of Honor

Two bridges located on State Route 27 in the Town of Southampton will be named in honor of fallen **State Trooper Jose A. Rosado** (date of death: January 24, 2007) and **State Trooper Donald A. Strand** (date of death: September 12, 1960) who died in service to the residents of the East End community:

- **Chapter #415 of the Laws of 2021** designates the Sunrise Highway Speonk Riverhead Road overpass as the “State Trooper Jose A. Rosado Memorial Bridge.”
- **Chapter #381 of the Laws of 2021** designates the Sunrise Highway Peconic overpass as the “State Trooper Donald A. Strand Memorial Bridge.”

COMMUNITY HOUSING FUND FOR OUR LOCAL FAMILIES

Supported by a coalition of more than 35 East End leaders and organizations, Chapter #455 of the Laws of 2021 enacts the Peconic Bay Region Community Housing Act to authorize the Towns of Southampton, East Hampton, Riverhead, Shelter Island, and Southold to create a Community Housing Fund to provide affordable housing opportunities on the East End. It will provide financial assistance to eligible first-time homebuyers and funding for the construction of new homes.

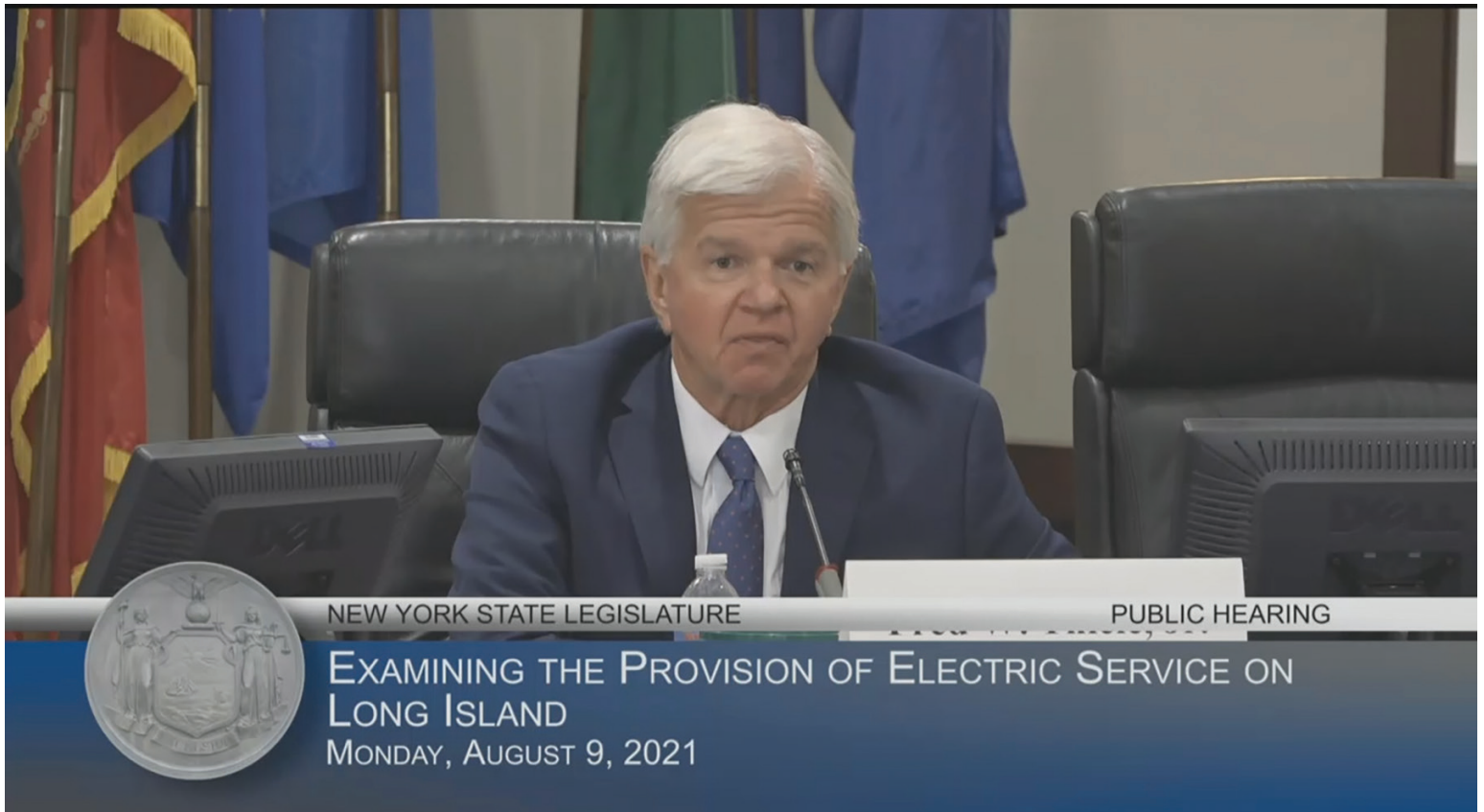
The law provides for an additional ½% to the 2% CPF real estate transfer tax to be used exclusively for housing. It also increases the exemption from the entire tax from the first \$250,000 of the purchase price to \$400,000 on Shelter Island, Southampton, and East Hampton. The exemption would increase from \$150,000 to \$200,000 in Southold and Riverhead. The exemption would apply to transfers of \$2 million or less. The law provides an actual tax cut for transfers under \$1 million on the South Fork and on Shelter Island, and for transfers of \$400,000 or less on the North Fork.

Towns will first have to prepare a Community Housing Plan showing the public how such housing funds would be used. The Towns would also have to pass a local law implementing the housing fund, subject to a mandatory referendum. A Town’s Community Housing Fund can only be implemented upon the approval of the voters.

If voters in all five East End towns approve a Community Housing Fund, it is estimated that over \$600 million will be generated for community housing. The legislation will be a major tool in providing housing opportunities for our local families and workforce.

FREE FERRY TRANSPORT FOR MEMBERS OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES

On Veterans Day, Governor Hochul signed my legislation authorizing counties to provide free ferry transportation within New York State to any active member of the United States Armed Forces when counties approve rates for private ferry companies. Public ferries already had this authority.



LIPA REFORM AFTER TROPICAL STORM ISAIAH FAILURES

On August 9th, I participated in the Assembly Energy Committee’s public hearing at Brookhaven Town Hall. We examined the management and provisions of electric service on Long Island by LIPA and its third party service provider PSEG-LI. After the failure of LIPA and PSEG-LI to respond to the extensive and pervasive power outages during Tropical Storm Isaias, it is clear that this management structure does not serve the interests of Long Island ratepayers.

I am committed to making LIPA a true public power company, as was envisioned by the sponsors of the act creating LIPA in 1985. Until then, I have sponsored legislation aimed at increasing transparency, accountability, and oversight over LIPA and PSEG-LI.

Chapter #369 of the Laws of 2021 allows LIPA to restructure its current debt obligation. This will allow for additional investments in storm hardening and resiliency efforts to protect this essential infrastructure from rising flood levels, increased wind speeds, and unpredictable storms. By providing a lower interest rate, LIPA ratepayers will save \$600 million in debt service over the next 20 years.



“KELP IS ON THE WAY”

Recently, I participated on a panel with researchers from Stony Brook Southampton and local marine farmers to discuss the benefits of kelp to Long Island’s economy and waterways. I passed legislation authorizing leases for kelp farming in Gardiners and Peconic Bays. Assembly Bill 7547A is awaiting the Governor’s signature. Its enactment will promote a growing industry that can help restore water quality and fish habitats on the East End while creating jobs for our traditional maritime industries.

SUMMER RENTALS EXEMPT FROM STATE HOUSING LAW ON DEPOSITS AND ADVANCES

Chapter #428 of the Laws of 2021 provides that summer rentals registered with local towns and villages will be exempt from the one-month limitation on security and advance payments in the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (HSTPA). This change will be a boon to our local economy which depends on a strong seasonal rental market.



HELP FOR OUR FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

Mastic Beach Fire Department Engine 5-12-4: Members of the Mastic Beach Fire Department joined in showing their appreciation for my efforts in securing state capital funding that enabled them to add a new pumper truck to their fleet of diverse apparatus that allows them to effectively and efficiently respond to all types of incidents in our community.

As Chair of the Assembly Local Governments Committee, I was pleased to have advanced the following new laws to benefit volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers:

- The point calculations for Length of Service Award Programs (LOSAP) for volunteer firefighters will be updated to create a more equitable and efficient system that reflects the complexity of current emergency response protocols under legislation which I sponsored. (Chapter #462)
- Beginning on July 1, 2022, temporary total disability weekly benefits for line-of-duty injuries under the Volunteer

Firefighters' Benefit Law and the Volunteer Ambulance Workers' Benefit Law will increase from \$400 to \$650 for injuries sustained after July 1, 2021. (Chapter #523)

- Municipalities will have the ability to increase the number of years of service that volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers participating in a defined contribution plan or defined benefit plan service award program may receive a contribution. (Chapter #400)

Awaiting the Governor's executive action is A.6767A/S.4562A by Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner and Senator John Brooks, which would provide that a death or disability resulting from a vascular rupture related to official duties and activities be covered under the Volunteer Firefighters' Benefit Law. This legislation was inspired by Chief James Brooks, Jr. who was a member of the Whitehall Volunteer Fire Company for 20 years and tragically died after tearing an artery while responding to a structure fire.

2021 STATE ENVIRONMENTAL

NYLCV SCORECARD

100%



State Environmental Scorecard

The New York League of Conservation Voters has released its State Environmental Scorecard for the 2021 State Legislative Session, which scores State Legislators based on their support for environmental legislation. As a cosponsor of legislation introduced in the State Assembly that addresses issues of environmental justice, public health, clean water, clean energy, and transportation emissions, and more, I was proud to receive a 100% rating.

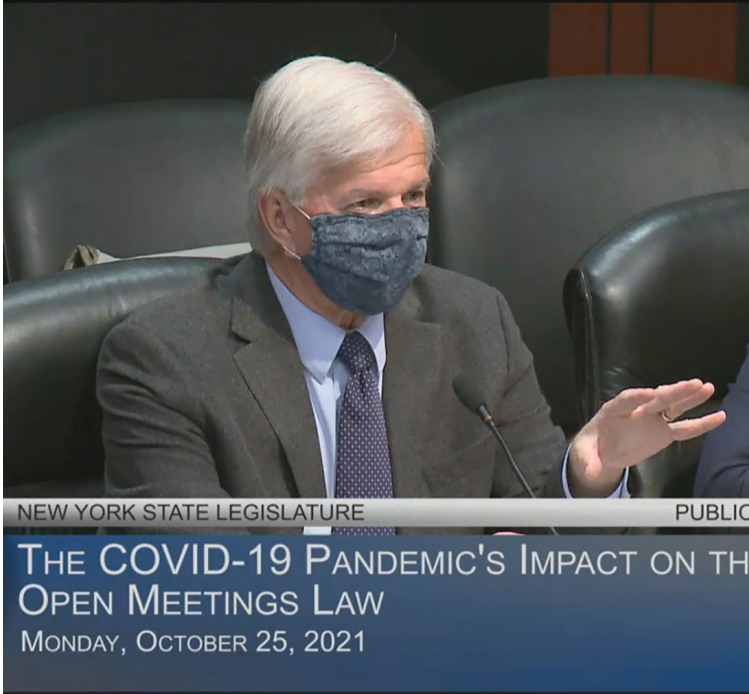
Julie Tighe, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters said, "We commend Assemblymember Thiele for earning a perfect score on this year's NYLCV State Scorecard and longtime record as a legislative advocate for the environment. Assemblymember Thiele has fought for critical issues, from land and water conservation and public health to clean water, clean energy, and reducing transportation emissions. We look forward to working with him to continue making progress in creating a safe, clean New York for future generations."



Pierson High School Commencement

Fifty years following my graduation from Pierson High School, I was honored to give the commencement speech for the Class of 2021 on June 26th.

MODERNIZING THE OPEN MEETINGS LAW TO INCREASE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



New York State's Open Meetings Law serves an essential role in ensuring the public's business is conducted in an open and transparent fashion. During the COVID-19 pandemic, an executive order was issued during the declared state-of-emergency to allow state and local governments to comply with the Open Meetings Law by meeting via video or conference call technology, provided that the meetings were recorded and later transcribed for the public. As we continue to deal with COVID, the Legislature passed a law in September to continue the virtual meeting provisions through January 15, 2022. As Chair of the Assembly Local Governments Committee, I co-hosted a hearing with the Assembly Governmental Operations and Cities Committees on October 25th to gather the vital input of the public that will be used in evaluating any permanent changes that need to be made to the Open Meetings Law going forward. We learned that new technology such as Zoom and other services can increase public participation. We are now evaluating how to update the law to improve public participation, while still insuring the accountability of public officials.



Follow me on social media to keep up-to-date on state legislation and local happenings throughout the district!



Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele, Jr.



@fred.w.thiele



@fred_thiele

3350 Noyac Road, Building B, Sag Harbor, NY 11963



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REPORTS TO THE PEOPLE

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Celebrating the grand reopening of the Quogue Library on June 26th. Congratulations!



Walking down Main Street, Southampton USA with Town Supervisor Jay Schneiderman and Councilman Tommy John Schiavoni during this year's 4th of July Parade.