



December 22, 2023

Greetings –

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy holiday season!



With the 2024 legislative session in Albany just around the corner, I would like to highlight some bills of mine that are among my priorities.

Promoting Renewable Energy

This past year, my Solar and Energy Tax Abatement bill ([A.6113/S.6640](#)), which extends and enhances the City's property tax abatement program for the installation of solar panels and energy storage systems such as batteries, was passed by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Hochul. This legislation will reduce carbon emissions and create good paying green jobs. Now I have introduced legislation ([A.8355](#)) that will open the program to not-for-profit buildings such as houses of worship and buildings providing affordable housing. These properties cannot typically take advantage of the tax reduction because they already are tax-exempt, so my bill structures the benefit as a tax credit. If we are serious about climate change and environmental justice these properties should have the opportunity to go solar as well and the tax credit is worth the expense.

Preserving Biodiversity

I will also be advocating for my bill the New York Wildlife Crossing Act ([A.4243/S.4198](#)), which directs the State Department of Transportation to identify sites along all highways, thruways and parkways in the State where wildlife crossings are most needed to increase public safety and improve habitat connectivity. These crossings help wildlife adapt to climate change and biodiversity loss by connecting habitats essential for wildlife survival and have been identified as a key strategy to mitigating the effects of climate change. This bill will better prepare the State to take advantage of funding allocated for wildlife crossings in the Federal Infrastructure and Jobs Act. I also recently introduced another bill promoting biodiversity ([A.8295](#)), which would provide additional protections for wolves migrating into New York State and require the Department of Environmental Conservation to collect genetic data on large canids in order to more fully understand the presence of wolves in the State. Studies have shown that predators such as wolves are an important part of a healthy ecosystem.

Criminal Justice Reform

States throughout the country including New York have made important strides in criminal justice reform, but the reality is that there are still too many people in prison in the United States for far too long, disconnected from their families and communities with little hope of rebuilding their lives. A recent New Yorker article - [Sentenced to Life for An Accident Miles Away](#) - delves into one aspect of the issue - how felony murder laws across the nation are a driver of mass incarceration. It is not a "feel good" story for the holidays but I urge you to read it. It mentions my bill ([A.2899/S.6865](#)) to restrict and reform New York's felony murder law as an important initiative. Felony murder doctrine allows a defendant to be charged and sentenced for murder in circumstances where they were committing or attempting to commit a felony but did not actually kill anyone. Evidence from across the country reveals that the impact of felony murder laws such as New York's are highly racially discriminatory with especially negative consequences for young people and victims of domestic violence. U.S. law with regards to felony murder is regressive by international standards and New York's laws are regressive compared to other states. California, Minnesota, Colorado, and Illinois have already reformed their felony murder laws and New

York should do so as well. I will continue to work with my colleagues and to build a coalition to advance this important legislation.

Christmas Tree Recycling

I know its early to think about taking down the tree, but wanted to share this from NYC Parks:



Join NYC Parks in the holiday tradition of recycling your Christmas tree. Just drop it off at one of many sites around the borough and it will be converted into mulch to nourish NYC trees and make NYC even greener. Mulchfest runs from December 26th – January 7th during park hours. Also, FREE bags of mulch, refreshments, and other tree-mentos will be available on “Chipping Weekend” Saturday, Jan. 6 and Sunday, Jan. 7 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Please remember to remove all lights, ornaments, and netting before bringing the tree to a Mulchfest site. For more information about locations and event details visit the Mulchfest website: nyc.gov/parks/mulchfest

If you have any concerns about these or any other legislative or community issue please email me at carrollr@nyassembly.gov or call (718) 788-7221. Please note our offices will be closed next week, Monday, December 25 to Monday, January 1. If you email us we will respond when we get back

beginning Tuesday January 2.

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