



ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 13, 2012

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ULSTER COMMITTEE MOVES BI-PARTISAN RESOLUTION CREATING RRA COMMISSION

**Unanimous Vote caps spirited debate and consensus building process highlighted by
leadership of Legislator's Belfiglio, Bartels and Wishnick**

The Ulster County Environmental, Energy and Technology Committee concluded an intense and spirited three hour committee meeting on the priority topic of the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (RRA). The result was a newly drafted resolution that addressed everyone's opinions and produced a framework of action to address one of the most critical issues facing the Ulster Legislature and local taxpayers today.

The resolution authorizes the creation of a new Legislative Commission with a diverse membership, empowered to make recommendations to the full Ulster Legislature on the future of the RRA. The resolution was moved to the Ways and Means Committee by unanimous vote where upon its approval will be sent to the Laws, Rules and Governmental Services Committee. At that time, the full Legislature will consider the resolution.

"I congratulate Chairman Belfiglio, Deputy Chairman Bartels and Legislator Wishnick for their dogged leadership on this emotional and critical issue facing the taxpayers of Ulster County. These individuals have forced this issue to the forefront of our agenda by spending a tremendous amount of time working on possible solutions when no easy answers existed. Congratulations to the full committee for your bi-partisanship and an "old fashioned, roll-up-your sleeves" work session to create a solution that all can embrace," emphasized Ulster Legislative Chairman Terry Bernardo.

The future of the RRA has reached a level of urgency due to an annual subsidy to support operations and financial obligations provided by the Ulster County Budget and local taxpayers. This subsidy, due to a variety of circumstances, now threatens to grow to over \$2 million a year impacting future budgets with no controls in place.

Ulster Environmental, Energy and Technology Committee Chairman Carl Belfiglio added, “The knowledgeable and dedicated work of Legislator Wishnick, working with all committee members in a spirit of bipartisanship, has moved our Legislature forward to seeking a real roadmap to address the long-term challenges of the RRA. This combined effort, seeking a real solution, has made it clear that the Legislature and our partners in government can no longer ignore the RRA and its significant financial drain on the taxpayers of Ulster County.”

The soon to be created Ulster Commission on the Future of the RRA will be authorized and encouraged to explore any and all alternatives that may present viable governmental options including, but not limited to flow control, the sale of the RRA and its assets, or enacting a new fee or use tax system to finance the RRA.

The non-partisan Commission shall consist of up to thirteen members comprised of three members appointed by the Majority Leader, three members appointed by the Minority Leader, both the Chairman of the RRA Board of Directors and its Executive Director, two Town Supervisors or Mayors appointed by the President of the Ulster Town Supervisors and Mayors Association, and at their option, the Ulster County Executive or designee, the Ulster Comptroller or designee and the Mayor of Kingston or designee.

Legislator Craig Lopez commented “I was encouraged by our production at the committee meeting. Creating a non-partisan commission with bipartisan support is a positive move forward for Ulster County taxpayers in finding a real solution for the RRA.”

“The UCRRRA Chairman of the Board Leon Smith and I greatly look forward to working alongside the elected officials appointed to the Commission that are tasked with assessing the future of the agency. Legislative Chairmen Terry Bernardo and all Committee members developed a solid resolution that allows for the formation of a commission that is comprised of stakeholders from across the political spectrum and thereby contains a large breadth of knowledge and experience,” stated Timothy Rose, UCRRRA Executive Director.

The Commission will be instructed to hold its first meeting no later than September 2, 2012 with a deadline for submission of any recommendations to the full Legislature and County Executive no later than October 31, 2012. A budget of not to exceed \$15,000 will be provided for the purpose of seeking expert opinions regarding questions and documents before the Commission.

All meetings of the Commission will be governed by the Open Meetings Law.