



## Westchester County Board of Legislators

800 Michaelian Office Building  
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor  
White Plains, New York 10601

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News from  
**JOHN G. TESTA,**  
your County Legislator...

## New Recycling Laws

Recycling of disposable materials has become increasingly more essential in recent years as population size and garbage creation has grown to record levels. The sheer volume of household waste has become both an environmental and economic challenge for individual municipalities as well as Westchester County.

Recently the Astorino Administration and the Committee on Environment and Energy announced a significant equipment upgrade to the County's Materials and Recovery Facility (MRF) that will enable the range of recyclable material to expand. Previously, the County's facility could only accept plastics labeled #1 or #2. With the new facility upgrade, the County facility will be able to accept plastics from #3 through #7. This expands the County recycling ability from water and soda bottles and detergent or milk containers to items such as yogurt cups, food containers and mixed plastics.

This change in recycling capability required a change in the Westchester County Source Separation Law, which dictates the material required to be recycled county wide. The Environment and Energy Committee has worked

closely with the Astorino Administration through the Environmental Facilities and Law Departments to amend the existing law to include the new list of materials that can and must be recycled.

As a member of the Environment and Energy Committee I supported the expansion of recycling to include plastics up to #7. This is a huge advancement for Westchester County because it will create not only significant environmental impacts but the costs of refuse disposal by individual municipalities throughout Westchester will be reduced at a time when operating costs must be reduced across the board.

It is important to point out that the revenues for recycled plastics will increase for the County. The value of higher numbered plastics has increased due to the market demand for these materials. The combination of reduced disposal costs with expanded revenues comes at a time when all operational costs are being reviewed and evaluated to reduce the cost of County government.

The expanded recycling law went into effect for Westchester residents on June 1, 2011.

# Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

*Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years*

Summer 2011 Newsletter



**John G. Testa**

District 1 ~ Peekskill, Cortlandt, Yorktown



Dear Neighbor,

As my first term as Westchester County Legislator for District 1 winds down I want to express how it has been a distinct honor and a pleasure to be able to serve the residents of Peekskill, Cortlandt and Yorktown.

During the last 18 months I have worked hard to begin the job of bringing fiscal sanity back to county government. I have been proud to be part of the small group of legislators who have worked to change the attitude and focus to that of reducing the size of county government, bring spending under control and eliminating the waste that has affected the taxpayers of Westchester for far too long.

Although we have made great strides, there is still much to be done. Yes, we have reduced county taxes for the first time in decades, and yes we have significantly reduced the county workforce, but it is not enough. Westchester is still ranked as the highest taxed county in the country, now for the third year in a row!

I look forward to continuing to work hard for the citizens of Northern Westchester and welcome the new members of the district due to the recent redistricting process. I am committed to bringing fiscal responsibility to county government while also maintaining vital services, protecting the environment and those most vulnerable in our society.

Please follow my progress and keep informed through my website [johngtesta.com](http://johngtesta.com), my blog, or on Facebook. Please sign up for my e-bulletins and quarterly e-newsletters. More information is located on the back of this newsletter. Don't hesitate to contact me with any of your concerns or suggestions. I always look forward to and appreciate input from the citizens I represent.

Thank you very much.



With Veterans at the Save the VA Rally. We called for the US Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure the services at the Veterans Affairs FDR Facility located in Montrose remains in service and dedicated exclusively to veterans. I sponsored legislation that was eventually passed to help the VA facility continue to provide these services.



Carrying on a long tradition of excellence in Peekskill basketball. Congratulations to the Peekskill Girls Basketball Team and coach Rodney Headley Jr. who were honored at the Board of Legislators for their first New York State Class A Championship.



This past year I helped secure \$6 mil. in bond funds. The funding allowed us to cap the Sprout Brook landfill. Some 170,000 tons of ash per year were dumped at the facility. Special liners will be used in the final covering procedures followed by planting of wildflowers and meadow grasses. Pictured here William Janeway, Regional Director, DEC and Linda Puglisi, Cortlandt Supervisor.

## District 1 Communities' Tax Reduction Will Exceed the -2.2% County Levy Adopted for 2011

Westchester County 2011 Tax Rate for District 1 Municipalities	
City of Peekskill	-5.91%
Town of Cortlandt	-2.26%
Yorktown	-2.98%



At a work session with County Executive Rob Astorino

Although overall county spending is still too high and the level of some projected revenues is no more than wishful thinking, the Westchester County's overall tax rate for 2011 will be cut for the first time in decades! The overall -2.2% tax reduction is the result of a year's worth of pressure by County Executive Astorino and the insistence by Republican legislators to change the way county government operates. After 12 years of unrelenting increases in spending and ever expanding programs, it's long past the time to change the attitudes, costs and how county government does its job. We still have a long way to go. Due to inconsistent NY State equalization rates and varying assessment throughout the county, the county tax rate is different for each community. Although a few will see an increase in their tax rate, most will experience a reduction. The municipalities I represent in District 1 will all see a significant reduction in their county tax bills this year. According to the

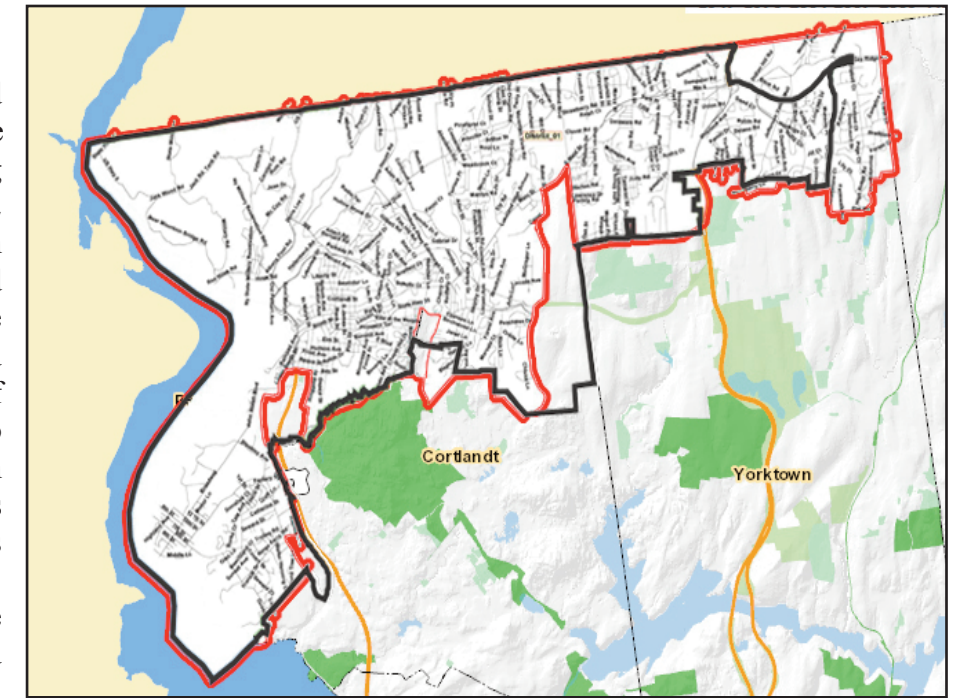
Westchester County Tax Commission, the City of Peekskill will have a -5.91% tax reduction, the Town of Cortlandt -2.26% and Yorktown -2.98%. There is still much to be done. Spending is still too high. Unfortunately the supermajority restored \$38 million in spending to the 2011 budget by overriding County Executive Astorino's vetoes. Lawsuits have been initiated by the supermajority to stop the county executive from streamlining the workforce and eliminating expensive, unnecessary contracts. Rest assured, I will continue to work with County Executive Astorino to further the right sizing of county government and bring relief to the hard working families of Westchester. We have done much in just one year's time. Imagine where we will be as we continue to push for policies that make sense for the residents of Westchester. You can count on me to do just that.

## Redistricting Plan Adopted

County Executive Robert Astorino vetoed the redistricting plan that was approved by the Board of Legislators, which then voted along party lines to override his veto. The 12 member supermajority on the board voted in favor of the plan, the 5 GOP legislators voted against it. I had repeatedly called on the county executive to veto this deeply flawed plan being forced on the citizens of Westchester. I am grateful that Rob Astorino supported my call to reject this partisan redistricting plan. Unfortunately, the plan is now county law that Westchester citizens must live with for the next decade.

In contradiction to claims that the redistricting process would be fair and transparent, a plan was adopted that ignored my concerns and requests as well as those of some of my colleagues and any meaningful input from the public. It is unacceptable to me that the City of Peekskill has been divided between two legislative districts. It had never been done before because there was no legitimate reason for it to happen. It is bad policy and bad government.

Even the nonpartisan League of Women Voters of Westchester had distanced themselves from the plan saying, "The process has been extremely messy and aspects of it have been questionable." The LWV went on to say, "We understand the committee is working to meet a June deadline. We do not believe however that this excuses the general sloppiness, if not partisan political nature of the proceedings."



■ New District Lines

■ Old District Lines

I have to accept the fact that when a 12-5 supermajority is in charge of redrawing the voting lines for the entire county, they will take some advantage of that opportunity. What I won't accept are the claims that this was a fair and transparent process that addressed the concerns of all legislators. The fact is the citizens of Westchester were ignored, misinformed and ultimately cut out of the process.

Even with these changes, I look forward to meeting my new constituents in District 1 and, rest assured, I will continue to put interests of all residents of Peekskill, Cortlandt and Yorktown before those of county government.



Saying it's "time to take a stand," Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino and I announced plans to introduce legislation challenging the legality of the Metropolitan Transit Authority's payroll tax. The announcement was made at the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce breakfast.



Yorktown Councilman Terence Murphy and I at ASK's (Alliance for Safe Kids) Youth Court Program. About 20 kids participated as defense and prosecution lawyers, witnesses, defendant and judge. This was a very impressive group of young men and women. ASK is a great program and I was very pleased to be involved.



This year we dedicated the beautiful memorial to Firefighter Sam Oitice at the park in Peekskill that is named in his honor. We will always remember the thousands from this region who died that day but we will especially remember our own local hero Sam Oitice. Please come out and be a part of the 10 year anniversary memorials this September 11, 2011.

## Charter Revision Commission Appointment

I am pleased to announce that I appointed John Mattis to The Charter Revision Commission. John has been a resident of the Town of Cortlandt for 38 years. He holds an M.B.A. in Finance from Fordham University and works as a financial advisor. John has been a civic leader for years, serving in such positions as; Chairman, Town of Cortlandt Zoning Board of Appeals and the Westchester County Compensation Advisory Board. The Charter Revision Commission will be composed of a total of 23 volunteer members. Each of the 17 County Legislators have individually appointed 1 member to the Commission. Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino appointed 6 members to the Commission. The panel is charged with amending or revising the existing charter, holding public hearings throughout the county to solicit public input, review and recommend changes and to issue a report outlining its findings.



John Mattis