

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Steve Stern

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR
SIXTEENTH DISTRICT
1842 E. Jericho Turnpike, Suite P
HUNTINGTON, NY 11743



PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: **Deborah Harris**
LEGISLATIVE AIDE
OFFICE: 631-854-5100
deborah.harris@suffolkcountyny.gov

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR STEVE STERN AND NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATOR DAVE DENENBERG INTRODUCE INITIATIVES TO REQUIRE ALTERNATE GENERATED POWER FOR GAS STATIONS

Post "Super -Storm Sandy" Fuel shortages demonstrate Long Island's vulnerability

Stern and IDA Will Pursue Tax Assistance for Businesses to Meet Requirement



l-r: front row: Suffolk County Legislator Steve Stern, Nassau County Legislator Dave Denenberg l-r, back row: David Rosenberg, Suffolk County IDA, Anthony Manetta, Executive Director, Suffolk County IDA, , Peter Zarcone, Suffolk County IDA, Steven Rossetti, Suffolk County IDA

HUNTINGTON, NY –Suffolk County Legislator Steve Stern (D-Huntington) 16th LD, and Nassau County Legislator Dave Denenberg have introduced legislation to require that gas stations in both Suffolk and Nassau Counties be equipped with alternate power sources to enable them to distribute fuel in the event of a long-term power outage.

The continuing aftermath of “Super-Storm Sandy” has clearly demonstrated the vulnerability of Long Island’s fuel distribution system and left tens of thousands of residents waiting in long lines for hours to purchase gasoline needed to get to work and power home generators. While other factors have contributed to these shortages, many gas stations were unable to pump their existing fuel supplies, exacerbating an already difficult situation.

At a press conference in Plainview, the two legislators stressed the importance of a regional approach to ensuring access to gasoline during emergencies and called on other local communities to join in this initiative. Reliable availability of gasoline is not just a matter of convenience, but is necessary to protect our most vulnerable who depend upon generated power in extended outages, to our emergency responders who need fuel to power vehicles and to the restoration crews, who cannot work without access to gasoline. “During the extended power outages we continue to experience, many of us had gas beneath our feet, but no way to use it,” Legislator Stern said. “This common sense initiative is important not only from a public safety perspective, but for economic development as well. Our commerce depends upon the ability to travel and this measure will help protect both our residents and our local businesses. Our local service stations are some of the most important businesses in our communities. However, particularly during the most challenging times, they have an important public role to play,” Legislator Stern continued, “This is a reasonable, yet critically important initiative to help ensure that we are better prepared for emergencies in the future and are better able to rely on our local resources, especially during the first several days after a disaster.”

“Many stations had gas in the ground, but no means to pump it, which forced Long Islanders to wait on frustratingly long lines for gas. This law hopes to alleviate that problem in the future, by having another means to pump gas,” said Legislator Denenberg.

Legislator Stern will work closely with the Suffolk County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) to provide important assistance to our local small businesses as a part of this important initiative. Steve Rossetti, Secretary of the IDA Board, will introduce a proposal at this week’s board meeting that will allow them to issue a specific sales tax exemption to implement this new requirement. Rossetti explained, “The function of the IDA is to provide assistance to our local businesses. This assistance will help ensure that they have the ability to remain competitive while also ensuring that they are an essential part of our local disaster preparedness and emergency response effort.”

Anthony Manetta, Executive Director of the Suffolk County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) pledged to work to develop tax-incentives to assist local gas stations to comply with the proposed requirement. "Legislator Stern's initiative is a positive for Suffolk County's business community. With so many gas stations powerless during the storm's aftermath, having a reliable fuel supply is important for our businesses to operate by getting employees to work and customers in the door. I look forward to working with him to utilize the IDA's economic development tools within the framework of his initiative."