

WHAT'S IN THE BUDGET FOR LI

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo proposed a \$168 billion budget on Tuesday for the 2018-19 fiscal year. Following are key proposals affecting Nassau and Suffolk counties:

ENERGY

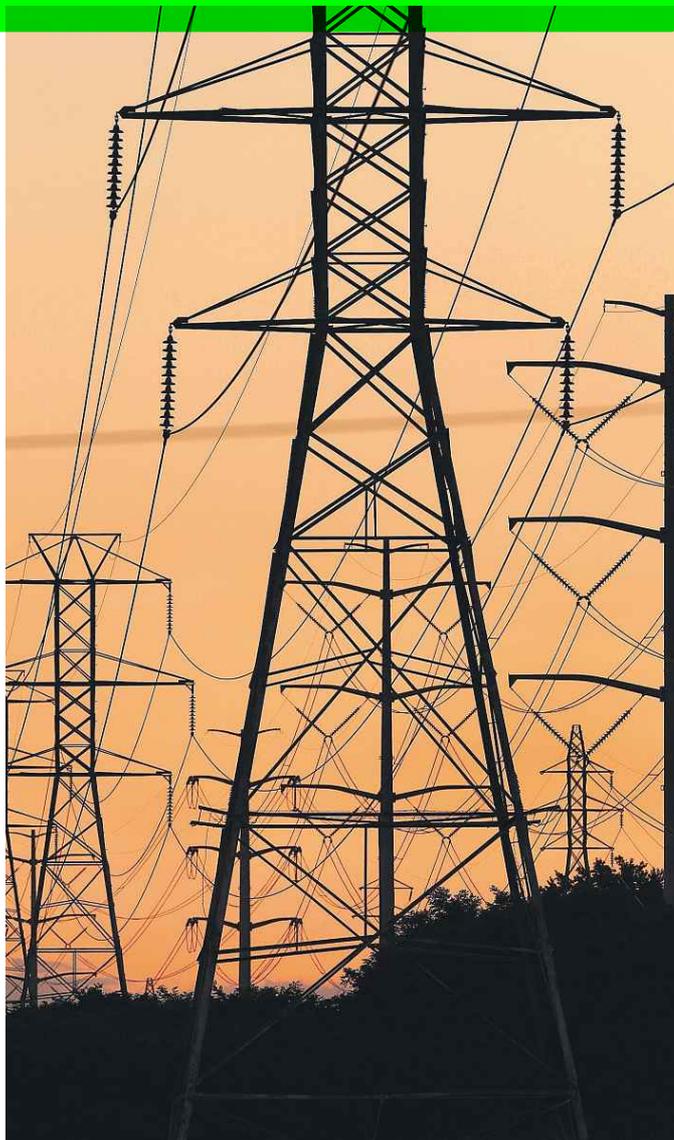
The administration will launch an initiative to create some 1,500 megawatts of energy storage by 2025, employing some 30,000 workers to develop, install and maintain utility-scale batteries. The batteries can help stabilize the local grid during peak-use times, while providing backup for proposed solar and offshore wind installations that may deliver power intermittently.

The state's Green Bank over time will put at least \$200 million toward the effort, according to the budget. The state's Energy Research and Development Authority will invest another \$60 million to help develop the new technologies.

The battery program will be paid for by the New York Energy Research and Development Authority's separate funding streams and are off-budget, state budget spokesman Morris Peters said.

Spending for the top state agencies involved in state energy policy is largely flat in the budget.

The Department of Public Service will see its current-year spending of \$80 million increase to \$81 million; spending by the New York Energy Research and Development Authority will drop by \$1 million to \$23 million; the New York Power Authority



A plan is to create 1,500 megawatts of energy storage by 2025.

will see a jump to \$14 million from \$3 million, reflecting capital spending for the new Empire State Trail, the budget office said.

As previously reported, the state plans to issue a request for proposals this year and next for some 800 megawatts of offshore wind energy, although a specific budget

outlay for the effort wasn't provided.

The budget proposes to end a sales-tax exemption for commercial transmission and distribution of gas or electricity bought from energy service companies. The budget said the exemptions are "no longer necessary."

— MARK HARRINGTON

HIGHER EDUCATION

Spending would rise by \$103 million to \$7.5 billion, up 1.4 percent. Public universities and colleges — including Stony Brook University, Farmingdale State College and SUNY Old Westbury — would receive a total increase of \$11 million, or 0.4 percent.

The state would spend \$18 million less, or 2.4 percent, on two-year schools such as Nassau Community College and Suffolk County Community College.

The Higher Education Services Corporation, which runs the state's Excelsior Scholarship, Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and other financial aid programs, would get an increase of \$80 million — 7.3 percent — to \$1.18 billion.

The Excelsior Scholarship program, a supplemental financial aid program to pay the full tuition of eligible students, will raise the income eligibility ceiling to allow students from households making up to \$110,000 to apply.

Cuomo again is asking lawmakers to pass the Dream Act, to make students who are immigrants without documentation eligible for state financial aid.

Also, a new program called



Carlin Seymore, 20, counts on aid at Farmingdale State.

"No Student Goes Hungry Initiative" will require all SUNY and CUNY schools to open campus food pantries or to link students who need food with a social service provider or other assistance available on campus. About half of the state's public campuses currently have food pantries, including Stony Brook University.

Cuomo would discount financial assistance called Bundy Aid to private colleges and reinvest the funds in a new \$30 million competitive matching grant program for capital projects on private campuses.

— CANDICE FERRETTE



An L subway train arrives at the Manhattan 8th Avenue station.

TRANSPORTATION

Addressing financial challenges faced by the MTA, in part by expediting the flow of revenue to the agency from one of its key funding streams.

Revenues generated by the MTA Payroll Mobility Tax would be collected by the MTA, rather than the state, as has been the practice since the tax was created in 2009. That would accelerate the payment of \$60 million to the MTA this year.

In all, the budget promises almost \$5.4 billion in operating support for transit systems statewide, including \$4.8 billion for the MTA — a 74 percent increase. That includes \$174 million for the MTA's \$836 million emergency subway improvement plan; the state has promised to fund 50 percent.

Transportation Department spending would increase by 5.4 percent to \$313 million. Funding for highway and bridge projects remains the same as last year.

Other transportation proposals include procurement reforms to reduce sealed bids for MTA contracts; requirements that all backseat automobile passengers wear seat belts, and children under age 8 be properly restrained in school buses; and removal of legal barriers to encourage self-driving car manufacturers to operate in New York.

The budget also includes a proposal to authorize local governments to work with the MTA on installing cameras at railroad grade crossings, including throughout the LIRR system.

— ALFONSO A. CASTILLO

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Cuomo wants to create a \$300 million fund to develop technology that supports advanced science, manufacturing and other business development that creates jobs in the state.

The fund “should help our efforts to create a ‘research corridor’ on Long Island,” that turns inventions from institutions such as Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and Stony Brook University into companies, said Kevin Law president of the Long Island Association business group.

Cuomo also proposed an eighth Regional Economic Development Councils’ competition, in which 10 regions vie for up to \$750 million in tax credits and grants.

Under Cuomo’s plan, downtowns would compete for \$10 million grants for revitalization efforts. Up to \$100 million would be distributed.

In addition the state would continue to support large construction projects in Nassau and Suffolk counties with



At a newly opened rink in Wyandanch, Kylie August, 6, gets skating tips from Brittney Skarulis.

what remains of a \$550 million fund established several years ago at the behest of the Island’s powerful Republican delegation in the State Senate.

Cuomo also would increase state revenue by expanding the collection of sales tax on more internet purchases. Large retailers are already

collecting the tax but others are not, particularly those selling through marketplaces such as eBay and Amazon, he said. — JAMES T. MADORE

CHILD SEX ABUSE

Cuomo’s budget calls for passage of the long-stalled Child Victims Act, a measure that would make it easier for victims of child sex abuse to sue perpetrators and institutions, including the Catholic Church.

Advocates called the move a major victory in their efforts to overturn one of the most restrictive statute of limitations on child sex abuse cases in the nation.

Kathryn Robb, a child sex abuse victim who grew up in Manhasset and is a long-time advocate for the act, called Cuomo’s action a “monumental step.”

Under state law, child sex abuse victims generally must file civil charges against an institution by age 21, and against their attacker by age 23. Criminal charges generally must be filed by the time victims turn 23.

The Child Victims Act

would allow them to sue until they turn 50, and would allow criminal charges to be filed up until they turn 28. The measure also creates a one-year window to revive old cases, and would affect both public and private institutions. Under current law, children abused in a public setting such as a school have 90 days from the date of the incident to sue.

The Catholic Church op-

poses the victims act, saying it could bankrupt the Church. Dioceses in New York City and on Long Island have reconciliation and compensation programs that provide victims with financial compensation if they agree not to take legal action against the dioceses in the future.

Last year, the legislation passed the Assembly but was not taken up by the Senate, where Republicans have long held it up. — BART JONES



Investigating groundwater contamination in Bethpage.

ENVIRONMENT

Cuomo’s proposed budget increases spending for the Department of Environmental Conservation by \$100 million to \$1.253 billion, an increase of 9 percent.

The spending plan continues funding of the \$2.5 billion Clean Water Infrastructure Act, which was passed and bonded in 2017.

Money for the Environmental Protection Fund stays flat at \$300 million. Funding includes \$154 million for open space programs, \$86 million for parks and recreation, \$39 million for solid waste programs and \$21 million for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The proposed budget also includes funding to fast-track construction of wells to

contain and treat groundwater contamination traced to a site where the U.S. Navy and what is now Northrop Grumman ran manufacturing, research and testing operations in Bethpage decades ago.

Nothing is earmarked in the budget for the \$150 million plan. But the state said “sufficient appropriations” will support fiscal year 2019 activities and it will seek reimbursement from Navy and Northrop Grumman.

The site has been on the state Superfund list since 1983 and is subject to several cleanup plans to remove contaminated soils and groundwater plumes, the largest of which has spread toxic chemicals as far as 3.7 miles. — EMILY C. DOOLEY



State Sen. Jeffrey Klein

NY PROBING ALLEGATION, KLEIN SAYS

BY MICHAEL GORMLEY

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ALBANY — State Sen. Jeff Klein, who is accused of forcibly kissing a staffer about three years ago, confirmed through his attorney that the case is being investigated by a state agency.

“We have already been contacted by an attorney from . . . [the Joint Commission on Public Ethics] regarding a request for information, and Senator Klein is cooperating fully,” Klein’s attorney, Michael P. Zweig, said Tuesday.

Klein (D-Bronx) has said since the allegation surfaced last week that he welcomed an investigation by JCOPE. He said the incident Erica Vladimer described never happened.

She alleged the incident took place March 31, 2015, at a bar a few blocks from the state Capitol. Vladimer left her job in May 2015.

In a Facebook posting, she said: “Sen. Klein abused his power by violating my body, and ultimately my mind and soul.”

Klein heads the Independent Democratic Conference, which shares power with the Republican majority and bolsters the GOP’s narrow Senate majority over mainline Democrats.

Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan (R-East Northport) said the Senate won’t investigate the allegation and hadn’t received a formal complaint. “I take him at his word, plain and simple,” Flanagan said.

AP / HANS PENNIK

BRUCE GILBERT

BARRY SLOAN