



## PRESS RELEASE

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**Contact: Tioga County Legislative Office**

### TIOGA COUNTY LEGISLATURE PROPOSES RECYCLING CHANGE

Owego, NY – The Tioga County Legislature is proposing a change how recycling is done in Tioga County.

The New York State (NYS) Solid Waste Act 1988 requires all counties to adopt local laws or ordinance requiring the separation and segregation of recyclable or reusable materials from solid waste.

Tioga County initiated the Countywide Curbside Recycling Program in 1992. The County's current program is weekly countywide curbside recycling. The contract expires at the end of this year and the Legislature went out for bid in June. The lowest bid came back more than double the cost of our current plan and it was for half the service for an increase of \$1.26 million annually.

The lowest bid was \$2.48 million dollars per year, which is \$12.4 million over the 5-year contract. This increase is primarily due to the plummeting of recycling commodity prices, increases in wages and increases in equipment and materials.

What we have heard from the community is they are willing to pay more to keep the same program. However, it is not that simple. New York State municipalities have a 2% property tax cap. Based on the 2020 budget numbers, the new recycling cost calculated in our property tax equates to a 5.1% increase in property tax. That means when property owners receive their town and county tax bill in January, the line item for recycling will more than double and there will be an increase of 5.1% for your regular property tax.

# Office of the Legislative Chair



Martha Sauerbrey Legislative Chair

The County is currently experiencing a 20% cut in funding from the State. We also have a 9% reduction in sales tax to date. Income from Tioga Downs is non-existent at this time. Because of all of this, we know that we will need to draw from our fund balance to cover budget costs for three to five years to recover from the COVID-19 experience. The bottom line is that this is a decision based on providing service and spending tax dollars wisely.

From our research, only 3 out of the 62 counties in NYS have countywide curbside recycling funded through their county. Most counties do not provide countywide curbside recycling and require that private haulers and municipalities that provide garbage pickup to also collect recycling.

The current plan for Tioga County is the following:

If your garbage is collected at your curb, the hauler YOU choose will be providing recycling likely with a surcharge.

Residents that bring their garbage to a transfer station or landfill should bring their recycling with them and place it in the appropriate location. There may be a charge.

If your municipality collects your garbage, they will provide recycling collection.

If the Legislature goes through with the plan, the recycling tax line will be removed from your property tax bill completely.

No one really likes change, and we certainly would like to keep weekly curbside recycling program however, the overall costs of maintaining the program outweigh the convenience of the program.

Written comments will be accepted until October 1, 2020 at [recyclingcomments@co.tioga.ny.us](mailto:recyclingcomments@co.tioga.ny.us).

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