



A.8011 (HOYT, ET AL.) **S.5560 (OPPENHEIMER, KRUEGER)**

Summary

This bill would establish the State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act, requiring that state agencies' projects that construct, expand, or reconstruct public infrastructure comply with certain criteria for smart growth. These criteria aim to maximize the use of existing infrastructure in communities and minimize unnecessary taxpayer costs associated with new infrastructure in undeveloped open space.

Explanation

New York State is increasingly afflicted with haphazard, short-sighted urban and suburban sprawl that threatens our quality of life. A recent survey revealed that while the population in Upstate New York grew only by 2.6 percent from 1982 to 1997, the amount of land developed in the area increased by 30 percent. Central New York saw its population decline by 6,500, while 100,000 acres of the region's farms and forests were lost to development.

This bill recognizes the State's role—and expenses incurred—in encouraging wasteful urban sprawl. It requires that state agencies designated as “infrastructure agencies”—e.g. the departments of Transportation, Education, and Health, the State Environmental Facilities Corporation, the Dormitory Authority, and others—consider smart growth criteria when examining the projects they finance.

Smart growth criteria establish a preference for the construction of state facilities in established urban and suburban centers, and prioritize projects located in areas designated for development in municipally approved land use plans. The criteria aim to protect natural resources, integrate mixed land uses, enhance public transit, and foster community planning.

Environmental Advocates of New York strongly supports this bill.

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