

# Assembly's Tokasz predicts strong future with Audubon

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ing that the infrastructure that we build or need to build in order to support those extended communities is going to cost us more money in the future." He said that schools, sewers and roads all cost a lot to maintain, "and we must convince local governments we do not want big brother from the state to step in, but it is in their best interests not to create these additional costs."

Today, Buffalo has much open space where old housing was knocked down, but the infrastructure – roads, water, sewers – is still there. "Why do you need to create more infrastructure in towns like Elma, which are really farm country, certainly when I was growing up they were."

He said that brownfields, a major issue in revitalizing urban centers, is important in Buffalo and western New York. "We are an old industrial city. We must find a way that balances, to the extent you can, the flexibility between financial incentives and the need to reuse this land in an appropriate way."

On the state's Conservation Fund, the majority leader said they would be looking at the license fee increase proposal by the governor and reviewing it. On the bird conservation program, he wants to become

more involved and learn about this effort. Tokasz said, "Everything is open" at this stage of the budget process. He added, "the fact that you have Carl Marcellino supporting this in the Senate, that bodes well for the program."

Tokasz, D-143s Assembly District, which covers part of Buffalo as well as Cheektowaga, Sloan and Depew, has been in the Assembly since 1988. He has chaired the tourism committee, which deals with state parks and recreation issues including snowmobile trails.

With a masters degree in education, he was an elementary school teacher from 1968 to 1977. He is a strong advocate for enhancing education. Assemblyman Tokasz also served for 12 years in Erie County government: deputy county clerk in charge of the auto bureau and first deputy and clerk to the Erie County Legislature.

Majority Leader Tokasz concluded by saying he looks forward to working with Audubon on these critical conservation issues.

# State of the State message

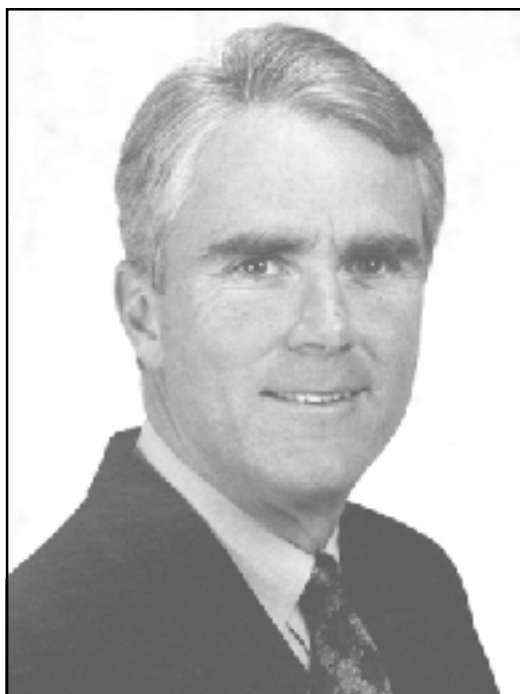
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the Environmental Protection Fund again this year," Gov. Pataki said. (See budget story, page 16.)

Tying conservation together with economic opportunities, the governor supported working forest conservation easements to strengthen the timber industry in the North Country. He also proposed using \$3.3 million of general fund revenues to reimburse local governments for property taxes lost when landowners enroll in the state forest tax programs, the Fisher, 480 and 480a programs. He also proposed

establishing a tax credit for private landowners for donating property or easements to maintain scenic lands.

Governor Pataki's State of the State message provided a major emphasis on environmental and conservation programs for 2001. Audubon staff members are working with the executive and legislative branches to develop and implement these incentives. For more information, contact William Cooke, director of government relations, (518) 869-9731.



## Governor promotes Cahill to senior post

*Audubon congratulates John Cahill for his outstanding work as DEC commissioner and wishes him well in his new position as the senior policy advisor for the governor. Commissioner Cahill was the recipient of Audubon New York's William Hoyt Environmental Award last spring.*

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