



SHELDON SILVER
Speaker

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1999 JAN 22 A 9:50

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January 19, 1999

Ms. Laurie A. Manzella, Clerk
Erie County Legislature
25 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14202

Dear Ms. Manzella:

Thank you for sending me a copy of the resolution adopted by the Erie County Legislature regarding settlement funds from the federal tobacco lawsuit.

The tobacco industry spends \$6 billion per year in the United States to promote its products. That equates to approximately \$1 million per day in New York State. It's no wonder that 3 million adult New Yorkers smoke, and that 17% of New York children in grades 7-12 smoke daily.

As you know, New York State stands to receive \$25 billion in federal tobacco settlement money and a formula for fairly distributing the funds between the counties and the state share was recently okayed by State Supreme Court Justice Stephen Crane. These funds will go a long way in compensating us for the \$3 billion in direct medical care costs that are incurred each year due to smoking and tobacco use.

You can imagine that I, too, am concerned about how this settlement money will be used. In fact, my colleagues and I are closely examining the many areas that could benefit from these funds. Please be assured that the comments of the Erie County Legislature will be useful to me during our discussions on this issue.

Sincerely,

SHELDON SILVER
Speaker

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