

March 25, 2019

Senator Sue Serino
188 State Street
Legislative Office Building, Room 613
Albany, NY 12247

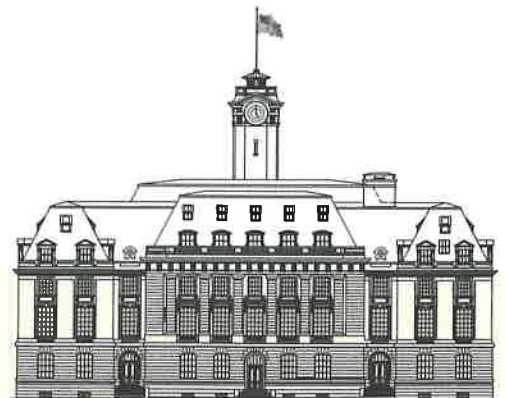
Re: Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases

Dear Senator Serino:

I applaud your efforts urging New York State to address Lyme and tick-borne diseases as a priority, and to expend more resources promoting research, education and prevention initiatives. Throughout my career in government, first as a member of the New York City Council, and now as Borough President, the rise in tick-borne diseases on Staten Island has been one of my main public safety concerns.

Not long ago Staten Island had no deer at all, but within the last twenty years we have developed a large – and growing – white tail deer population. I do not believe it is a coincidence that we are now seeing an increase in reported Lyme cases.

My team and I have travelled outside our borough in order to gain a better understanding of efforts to control ticks and tick-borne diseases. We have visited Dr. Richard Ostfeld in his lab at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Dutchess County in order to have a firsthand look at his work in curbing the tick population, and to explore whether or not such measures can be implemented here on Staten Island. My office has also visited Professor Maria Diuk-Wasser's lab at Columbia University's Department of Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology, where they are analyzing ticks infected with pathogens and the wildlife that is serving as a food source.

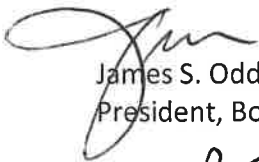


Their team is also surveying public opinion on Staten Island about deer, tick-borne illnesses and the use of bait boxes for tick control. Most recently, we visited Essex County, NJ to speak with authorities on their methods of conducting deer-population control culls.

Last year, I assisted several patients in forming a Lyme Disease Support Group. This group has met several times and the patients find it invaluable to spend private time together and share their experiences.

I look forward to our respective offices remaining in touch and sharing ideas on this important health issue; my staff member Kelly Pereira has spoken with Kara Cumoletti, Director of Communications and Operations, in this regard. In closing, I applaud your efforts on the Lyme disease issues and look forward to our mutual cooperation going forward.

Sincerely,



James S. Oddo
President, Borough of Staten Island

*P.S. Great job, Santa.
I'd love if our offices
could work together on
this. all the best!*