

NEWS:



Edward A. Diana
Orange County Executive

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DIANA VETOES LEGISLATURE'S AMENDED 2012 BUDGET

GOSHEN – Orange County Executive Edward A. Diana released the following statement today regarding the Orange County Legislature's Amended 2012 Budget:

As County Executive, I have long believed that the highest calling and most profound responsibility of anyone in my position is to protect the county's finances. Signing this budget in its current form would be a violation of my fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers and the citizens of Orange County. As result, I am left with no other option than to veto the changes made by the Legislature.

I have been asked by the County Legislature to sign an amended budget that is unsound and unbalanced and relies on funds from the federal and state governments that may never be realized. Counting on unidentified, speculative and hypothetical costs savings that may never materialize is not in the best interest of all the taxpayers of Orange County. By spending money we do not have, and draining the County surplus to dangerously low levels, we risk the stability of our current and future financial position. As County Executive and Chief Budget Officer, these options are unacceptable to me.

For the past ten years, my administration has enacted tough fiscal policies and controls that have resulted in a Triple-A bond rating and financial stability for our government and residents. Orange County is one of only two counties in the State of New York with a Triple-A bond rating, which is based on our fiscally sound budget policies and spending practices. In Moody's February 23, 2011 report issuing the Triple A bond rating to Orange County, they specifically stated that the "deterioration of liquidity and financial reserves could make the [bond] rating go down." This, in turn, will increase the cost of borrowing, and will cause a downward, spiraling effect on the County's economic growth and stability. There is no doubt in my mind that adopting a budget that is inherently not balanced risks reducing the County's surplus to a dangerously low level and jeopardizes the County's bond rating. These are not risks that I am willing to take as the County's Chief Executive Officer and Chief Budget Officer.

The Legislature today passed a Request for Proposals to place Valley View on the market for sale. I still remain confident that the best option for all is the sale of the Valley View Nursing Facility to a non-profit or private owner. I am confident that through this effort, we will be able to keep the care and services in tact for facility's residents and jobs in place for our County's citizens.

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