



NEWS FROM

ULSTER COUNTY

County Executive Jen Metzger

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Ulster County Legislature Approves Occupancy Tax Allocation to Fund Housing, Transportation

KINGSTON, NY - On Tuesday evening, the Ulster County Legislature approved County Executive Jen Metzger's proposed resolution for a policy dedicating 25% of annual occupancy tax revenues to the Housing Action Fund and 25% to public transportation initiatives. The resolution, sponsored by Majority Leader Abe Uchitelle and amended to commit another 10% of annual revenues to the Ulster County Department of Tourism, passed by a vote of 16 to 6.

These funding streams will begin at the end of this year, and continue each year thereafter, yielding a steady stream of funding. This equates to approximately \$1.5 million annually for both housing and transportation, and \$630,000 for tourism. The remainder of occupancy tax revenues will be returned to the General Fund.

"Sustained investment in housing and transportation is essential to our prosperity and well-being," **said County Executive Metzger**. "Our workers need affordable housing and an affordable way to get around. I want to thank the Legislature, and especially Chair of the Health, Human Services and Housing Committee Abe Uchitelle, for their partnership and support of this policy."

"This resolution represents a significant step forward for Ulster County, ensuring sustainable funding for essential housing, public transportation, and tourism initiatives. By dedicating a portion of the occupancy tax revenue, we are investing in long-term stability and growth, which will benefit our community for years to come," **said Peter Criswell, Chair of the Ulster County Legislature**.

"Dedicating a consistent and automatic funding stream for housing and transportation is hugely important. Tonight we have shown the community, including private-sector partners

who will be essential in creating affordable housing units, that Ulster County is serious about tackling this issue with a consistent and dependable approach. We have also shown our residents that we are serious about improving our public transportation system, which is critical in increasing equity and access while also tackling the climate crisis,” **said Ulster County Legislator Abe Uchitelle.**

“Dedicating a significant portion of the occupancy tax to housing demonstrates how committed the Legislature is to solve our county’s housing crisis. This dedicated investment creates a fund that must and will be used to create supporting, affordable, and middle-class housing for our communities. Adequate affordable housing at all income levels is one of the primary drivers of economic development. So, in addition to providing housing to those in need, this fund will act as an accelerator for our County economy,” **said Ulster County Legislator Jeff Collins.**

BACKGROUND

In June 2023, the Legislature made a Home Rule Request to the State for an occupancy tax increase to four percent, in a resolution sponsored by Legislator Uchitelle. This tax had not been raised since it was first instituted in 1991, and at two percent was far lower than neighboring Counties, which have an occupancy tax rate of 5%. In December 2023, the Ulster County Legislature approved a local law increasing the occupancy tax on hotels, motels, and short-term rentals from two percent to four percent. The 2024 Adopted Budget dedicated 25 percent of the revenue from the occupancy tax to fund the UCAT public transportation system and 25 percent to support the Housing Action Fund, with the remaining 50% supporting the County’s General Fund to lessen the burden on County taxpayers.

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