

INSIDE

—

Next Week's Calendar

Legislative Session, public hearings and budget hearings.

—

Legislative News

Legislative Committees Next Week

Legislature Passes 47 Bills

—

Updates from the Governor

Community Vaccination Update

NY companies to receive state funds to produce COVID-19 related equipment & supplies.

Potential public takeover of LI water utility.

Executive Orders

—

Agency News

DFS housing discrimination report.

NYS Gaming Commission report.

An Active Start to February

*The first week of February is a wrap and with Punxsutawney Phil's less than optimistic prediction for an early spring as a backdrop, we move into the third week of hearings on the Governor's proposed budget. [See the schedule in the **Legislative News** section.](#)*

The week was punctuated with positive news regarding COVID-19 infections and increased federal vaccine allocations to states, along with continued fallout surrounding the State Attorney General's report on COVID related nursing home deaths, the release of a report by the Department of Financial Services on "redlining" in the Buffalo Metropolitan area, the release of a study on gaming market in New York by the NYS Gaming Commission, and of course the movement of bills through the legislative process.

Redlining Report - The NYS Department of Financial Services released a report on Thursday, February 4, on the "redlining" of certain areas of the Buffalo Metropolitan area by lenders and real estate brokers. The practice is a form of housing discrimination that includes a range of illegal practices such as refusing to do business in certain neighborhoods based on its ethnic or racial composition, and/or imposing more onerous terms on home loans in a particular neighborhood. [See the **From the Agencies** section for more information and link to the report.](#)

Gaming Market Study - The NYS Gaming Commission released a report on a study completed by the Spectrum Gaming Group related to the evaluation of the gaming market in the state, and the potential impacts of changes to the market that may occur in New York, as well as the market impact of changes that may occur outside of the state. [See the **From the Agencies** section for more information and link to the report.](#)

COVID-19 - The Governor [announced](#) on Tuesday that the federal government intends to increase state vaccine allocations by 20 percent for the next three weeks (a 4 percent increase over the previous announced expansion). An additional 10 percent will go directly to pharmacies in New York that are currently charged with vaccinating the over-65 population.

Nursing Home Data - An Albany Supreme Court Judge issued a [ruling](#) on February 3 declaring that the Department of Health must disclose nursing home death data to the Empire Center for Public Policy. The data had been requested through the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). DOH had updated numbers related to nursing home deaths immediately following the release of the State Attorney General [report](#) last week.

Emergency Powers - In a statement issued on Tuesday, State Senate Finance Committee Chair Senator Liz Krueger floated the possibility of the legislature conducting "oversight hearings" and to potentially "re-evaluate" the use of the emergency powers that were granted to the Governor by the legislature as the COVID pandemic unfolded ([Chapter 23, L. 2020](#)). The entire statement is [reported here](#) along with a response from the Governor's office.



From NYS Governor Cuomo

Additional Community COVID Vaccination Kits Deployed

Governor Cuomo [announced](#) that 35 community-based pop-up vaccination sites will come online this week at churches, community centers, public housing complexes and cultural centers.

New York Companies to Produce COVID-19 Related Equipment and Supplies

The Governor [announced](#) that four additional New York companies and one company that has previously received state support will be awarded nearly \$2 million in state support to produce supplies to help combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

\$15 Million Available for Piloting Community Thermal Systems

Governor Cuomo [announced](#) that up to \$15 million is available through a new program to pilot the use of community thermal systems to reduce buildings' greenhouse gas emissions.

Potential Public Takeover of New York American Water Company on Long Island

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo [directed](#) Rory I. Lancman, Special Counsel for Ratepayer Protection at the NYS Department of Public Service, to begin and lead a "municipalization feasibility study" regarding Long Island's largest privately-owned water company, New York American Water Company, Inc.

Executive Orders

No new COVID related Executive Orders were issued this week.

Legislative News

2021 Legislative Session Days

Session will be held on Monday, the 8th, Tuesday, the 9th, and Wednesday the 10th next week. You can find the 2021 Legislative Session calendar [here](#).

Legislative Committees

The Senate and Assembly held several committee meetings this week. Notably, both Houses moved their mobile sports betting proposals to the Finance and Codes Committees, which is one step closer to a floor vote. Next week the Senate will host 12 Committee Meetings ([live stream available on the Senate website](#)), with the Assembly expected to host its own slate of meetings as well ([found here once announced](#)).

Legislation Passed This Week

The legislature acted on 47 bills this week, including [A.3355 \(Paulin\)/S.1351 Hoylman](#) which passed both houses and was signed into law (Chapter 23). The measure repeals a section of the penal law (240.37) related to loitering for the purpose of engaging in prostitution. Other legislation passed by the houses included bills related to specific health care concerns and local issues.

Scheduled Public Hearings and Budget Hearings

On March 4th, 2021 the Senate Standing Committee on Labor and Transportation will hold a public hearing to hear about the difficulties of taxi drivers and livery drivers across New York State. [Full schedule here](#). With regard to [budget hearings](#), Human Services will be held on February 9th, Public Protection on the 10th, and Local Government on the 10th.

From the Agencies

Department of Financial Services

A [Report by Department of Financial Services](#) found a significant lack of lending in majority-minority neighborhoods and to homebuyers of color. The findings come decades after a housing discrimination practice called **redlining** had been banned. The report recommends legislative action to require non-bank mortgage lenders to comply with the New York State Community Reinvestment Act and calls on federal government to take further action regarding federally chartered institutions.

NYS Gaming Commission

The New York State Gaming Commission announced on January 26th that the New York Gaming Market Study Report had been completed under contract by Spectrum Gaming group and submitted to the Commission. The study, which includes information related to the economic, demographic and commercial factors that impact the State's gaming industry, can be found [here](#).

