The next topic we will discuss is **Clean Air.**

Clean air" refers to air free from pollutants, contaminants, and harmful substances such as dust, smoke, toxic gases, and biological agents like bacteria or mold. It is essential for human health, the environment, and overall well-being.

Improving Air Quality in Westchester County has been and will always be challenging. To enhance air quality, we need to reduce Vehicle emissions and monitor industrial activities, maintain our green space for the benefit of trees and wildfires, and be prepared for natural events that might hurt the environment.

New York State has implemented several initiatives to improve air quality and reduce pollution, reflecting its commitment to environmental sustainability and public health. Key programs include:

**Clean Fuel Standard of 2025—**Establishes the clean fuel standard of 2025; provides that such a standard is intended to reduce greenhouse gas intensity from the on-road transportation sector, with further reductions to be implemented based on technological advances. Using carbon-free non-fossil fuels like biofuels is a key component in reducing the emissions of medium to heavy trucks, which are major contributors to Westchester.

**Tappan Zee Mario Cuomo Bridge dedicated bus lane—**We successfully obtained a dedicated bus lane on the bridge for public transportation. While it has yet to become reality, it is intended to connect Westchester with Rockland from the Cross Westchester Expressway, NYS, and New England Thruways. The dedicated bus lane on the bridge is a crucial step toward improving public transportation efficiency. Once implemented, it will enhance connectivity between Westchester and Rockland, facilitating smoother travel from the Cross Westchester Expressway to the NYS and New England Thruways. Community support remains essential for its realization.

**Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) -** Enacted in 2019, the CLCPA sets ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and achieve an 85% reduction by 2050. The Act also mandates that 70% of the state's electricity come from renewable sources by 2030 and 100% from carbon-free sources by 2040. It emphasizes environmental justice by directing a significant portion of the benefits to disadvantaged communities.

**Statewide Community Air Monitoring Initiative -** Launched in 2022, this initiative focuses on monitoring air quality in ten disadvantaged communities across New York. Utilizing mobile monitoring, the program collects data to identify pollution sources and develop strategies for improving air quality. The initiative aims to engage community members, ensuring that mitigation efforts are effectively targeted.

**Cap-and-Invest Program** - Proposed by Governor Kathy Hochul, the Cap-and-Invest Program aims to establish a declining cap on greenhouse gas emissions. Proceeds from the program will be invested in initiatives to reduce pollution, limit potential costs to residents, and maintain the competitiveness of New York industries. This program is part of the state's strategy to meet its climate goals under the CLCPA.

**Clean Air NY -** is an initiative that educates the public on simple, everyday travel choices to improve air quality. It provides real-time Air Quality Action Day updates via text, email, and social media, encouraging actions such as using public transportation, carpooling, biking, or walking to reduce vehicle emissions.

**Congestion Pricing Plan -** New York City has implemented the nation's first congestion pricing plan. The plan imposes a toll for cars entering lower Manhattan, aiming to reduce traffic congestion and emissions while generating revenue for public transportation improvements. Additionally, the plan is expected to enhance air quality and promote the use of public transit, as the funds generated will be allocated to subway and bus upgrades. City officials anticipate that this initiative will ease traffic flow and serve as a model for other urban areas grappling with similar challenges.

These initiatives demonstrate New York State's comprehensive approach to enhancing air quality, addressing climate change, and promoting environmental justice.

Introduce Tom Bourgeois to start