

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR KARA HAHN



FIFTH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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**Dry Cleaners in Suffolk to Come Clean
on Human/Environmental Impacts of Solvents Used**

Legislator Hahn passes public information policy that will provide consumers with information on "greenness" and potential hazards associated with dry cleaning chemicals.

Hauppauge, NY – Consumers in Suffolk County will soon have a better understanding of the environmental footprint their dry cleaners have after the Legislature, today, voted to approve a Local Law requiring professional garment cleaning establishments to post signage indicating the "greenness" of cleaning methods employed.

Under the bill sponsored by Majority Leader Kara Hahn (D-Setauket), the Suffolk County Department of Health Services will be charged with categorizing dry cleaning chemical solvents. The department will rank each chemical grouping based on both human and environmental impacts and then provide color coded signs to cleaners during annual inspections that are currently required under county code. The signs given to dry cleaners will indicate the cleaning methods and solvents used by each individual shop and are required to be "visually" posted in the shop's window and behind the counter to highlight for consumers both human impacts and the environmental effects of the establishment's chosen approach.

[More]

“This bill empowers consumers and allows them to make more informed decisions, which in the end is good for all of us,” said Legislator Hahn. “While it is common for consumers to read food ingredient lists and nutrition labels and to search out reviews for other products, most are hard pressed to find the time to research details related to a myriad of dry cleaning solvents, figure out the exact solvent used by their cleaner and then investigate its potential impact on his or her self, family and environment. Our action will make it easier.”

To enhance consumer understanding of the dry cleaning industry, the new program will also require the Department of Health Services to develop and maintain a website for the public detailing various solvents and processes used throughout the County and their potential environmental and/or human safety issues. The web page’s address will be posted on the signs distributed to shops along with its QR code for consumers wishing to quickly access data while at a cleaner.

“Just as consumers have the right to know what’s in their food and body care products, they should have the right to know what is being used to clean their clothing,” said Beth Fiteni, owner of Green Inside and Out, an organization committed to empowering the public to find healthier alternatives to common toxins. “This information is useful in educating the public, and even dry cleaning workers, about the available less-harmful alternatives.”

The bill now goes to County Executive Steve Bellone for his signature within the next 30 days.

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