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## The Week That Was

02-08-19

### 1. New York, We Have A Problem

#### *Our Spin:*

With a new full Democratic majority in all three branches of New York State government, it's safe to say that anyone who walked the halls of the Capitol in January could feel the difference in style the Democrats are ruling with. What used to be the norm here on The Hill in Albany, is no longer... This trend continued to start the month of February. On Monday, Governor Cuomo held a rare joint press conference with Comptroller Tom DiNapoli in the "Red Room," to highlight the sharp drop in New York State income tax collections, which will likely force revisions to Cuomo's \$175.2 billion budget proposal. What's even rarer, is while speaking with Susan Arbetter on Tuesday morning at the Bull Moose Club, Comptroller DiNapoli described his relationship with Governor Cuomo as "better than ever." Is it possible Cuomo feels left out of the Stewart-Cousins/Heastie cozy relationship and is looking for a new best friend in Albany?

#### *The Story:*

Governor Andrew Cuomo and State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli said Monday that New York's personal income tax receipts in December and January were \$2.3 billion below forecasts. The Governor and Comptroller attributed the decline to the federal tax legislation's elimination of full state and local tax deductibility, which disproportionately impacted New York and other predominantly Democratic states. Similar revenue declines have also been observed in other states. Amendments to the 2020 Executive Budget will include

revisions to reflect updated impacts to the State financial plan.

"The federal administration's SALT policy is an economic civil war that helps red states at the expense of blue states, and we are now seeing the potentially devastating effect of it in the form of significantly lower tax receipts," Cuomo said. "These changes hurt our economy and make New York less competitive, and we will not stop ringing the alarm bell about this punitive policy until Congress reverses it."

Cuomo said the SALT deduction cap that took effect in early 2018 led many of the state's wealthiest residents to relocate. He noted that the highest earners pay 46% of the state's income tax and that even a small number relocating creates serious revenue challenges.

DiNapoli said his office is studying the revenue decline to determine how it will impact the state's budget for 2020 and emphasized the need for increased rainy day funds. "This is the most serious revenue shock that the state has faced in many years," said DiNapoli. "I think it could get worse before it gets better based on the numbers as we see them."

[Ny.gov](http://Ny.gov)

### 2. New Guy, A Great Deal Like The Other Guy

#### *Our Spin:*

Some have called it "the best job in state government." Department of Environmental Commissioner Basil Seggos apparently figured that out. Again. The Commissioner had shocked many at the end of last year saying he was

departing the coveted position that comes with the same response kit other senior officials enjoy: state seal bomber jackets, cargo pants and work boots. After a series of high profile and evolving environmental issues and emergencies such as a recent Hudson River rescue, the respected state official called it quits – on quitting. Seggos has said he is sticking around to enjoy one of the most diverse and active senior positions in New York State government.

*The Story:*

Basil Seggos, commissioner of the state Department of Environmental Conservation, had announced plans late last year to leave the post he's held since 2015, creating an opening at the top of the major agency responsible for protecting New York's environment. But on Thursday, Seggos reversed course, announcing he would remain as commissioner for the foreseeable future.

Seggos, who was Gov. Andrew Cuomo's top environmental advisor before he was appointed to the DEC job, said he intends to remain in his position "for the long haul." "The governor has really prioritized the environment ... and I felt that it would be a mistake to leave at this very important juncture," Seggos said. "We've really hit our stride on the environment and we have a huge amount of work ahead of us on climate, on water, on accessibility in the outdoors, on protecting open space. There were too many reasons for me to stay in this ... than step out of this fight," he added.

His agency is responsible for targeting pollution and managing wildlife programs, regulating all hunting and fishing in the state. The position requires versatility: Just last month, Seggos and the DEC helped lead an effort to retrieve a handful of boats — including a river cruise ship and a small barge — that had broken free of their moorings and were floating down an ice-filled Hudson River.

"My number one priority in this job is to tackle this climate crisis, it's an existential crisis," Seggos said when asked what his priorities were in the coming year. Seggos

said addressing the water quality crisis is also important, particularly getting additional funding for water infrastructure as Gov. Andrew Cuomo has proposed.

[Democrat & Chronicle](#)

**3. James W. Clyne**

*The Story:*

James W. Clyne, age 85 of Delmar, died on February 1, 2019. He was born in New Haven, Conn. on February 10, 1933. He graduated from Bethlehem Central High School, Amherst College, and Albany Law School. After serving in the U.S. Air Force as a judge advocate general, he worked in Albany for the New York State Insurance Department, including seventeen years as deputy superintendent. James was a communicant at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Delmar. He is survived by his children, Christine Clyne (Edward Beecher) of Tamworth, N.H., James W. Clyne Jr. (Shauneen McNally) of Delmar, Elizabeth Clyne of Delmar and Carolyn Clyne (Andrew Ross) of Sandy, Utah. He had six grandchildren, Jesse Beecher, Juliana Beecher, Kathleen Clyne, James W. Clyne III, and Ryan and Ethan Long; and two great-grandchildren, Elsa Beecher and Faye Beecher. He is also survived by his friend, Deborah Greer, and her children, Jason Greer and Nicole Werek. James was predeceased by his wife, Diane Crannell Clyne (1984); his brother, John J. Clyne; and his sister, Helen Potter. The family is grateful to Dropadie Mercer for the care and companionship she provided. Calling hours will be at Applebee Funeral Home in Delmar on Thursday, February 7, from 4 to 7 p.m. The funeral Mass of Christian Burial will be in St. Thomas the Apostle Church on Friday, February 8, at 9:30 a.m. followed by internment in the Calvary Cemetery in Glenmont. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Regional Food Bank, 965 Albany Shaker Road, Latham, NY, 12110..

