

STATE OF NEW YORK

11057

IN ASSEMBLY

October 7, 2020

Introduced by COMMITTEE ON RULES -- (at request of M. of A. Thiele) --
read once and referred to the Committee on Local Governments

AN ACT making an appropriation to the East End Supervisors and Mayors
Association for a feasibility study update relating to the creation of
Peconic county

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assem-
bly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The Legislature hereby finds that the creation of Peconic
2 county from the towns of East Hampton, Riverhead, Shelter Island, South-
3 ampton, and Southold, from the existing county of Suffolk, would estab-
4 lish New York state's 63rd county.

5 The territory proposed to become Peconic county has a population of
6 136,793 or 9.2% of Suffolk county's population. The territory which
7 would become Peconic county makes up 45.7% of the real property tax base
8 of Suffolk county. It is estimated the territory pays about 15% of the
9 sales tax. If Peconic county were created, it would have a population
10 larger than 40 of New York State's 57 counties, outside of the city of
11 New York.

12 The territory proposed to be Peconic county is largely rural and exur-
13 ban. The economic base of this region remains largely agriculture, fish-
14 ing, second homes, and tourism. In contrast, western Suffolk is suburban
15 with a much more commercial and industrial based economy. The population
16 density of the west is more than six times that of the proposed Peconic
17 county. As a result of the long narrow geography of Suffolk and the
18 different demographics of east and west, Suffolk county current main-
19 tains three separate county centers in Hauppauge, Yaphank, and River-
20 head.

21 In 1994, this legislature appropriated fifty thousand dollars towards
22 the preparation of a Peconic county feasibility study. In 1995, "Peconic
23 County Financial Feasibility Study" was issued. The study concluded that
24 Peconic county was financially feasible. Specifically, the study
25 concluded that real property taxes could be reduced by 50% in the new
26 county with the same level or better services. Any financial impact to
27 remaining Suffolk county would be minimal.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 In 1996, a referendum was held in the territory proposed to be Peconic
2 county which requested that the legislature provide for a binding refer-
3 endum on the question of the creation of Peconic county. That referendum
4 passed by a margin of 71% to 29%. However, no binding referendum was
5 ever held.

6 The legislature wishes to pursue measures which could improve the
7 delivery of governmental services at a reduced cost. The Peconic County
8 Financial Feasibility Study must be updated in order to make an informed
9 assessment of the financial impact of a new county.

10 It is the purpose of this act to update the feasibility of creating
11 Peconic county. The study would be undertaken by the East End Supervi-
12 sors and Mayors Association.

13 § 2. The sum of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000), or so much
14 thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated in the fiscal year
15 2020-2021 to the East End Supervisors and Mayors Association, out of the
16 moneys in the state treasury in the general fund to the credit of the
17 local assistance account, not otherwise appropriated, and made imme-
18 diately available for the update of a financial feasibility study of the
19 creation of Peconic county. Such moneys shall be payable on the audit
20 and warrant of the comptroller on vouchers certified or approved by the
21 department of state in the manner prescribed by law.

22 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.