

New York Note – State Session, OCM Acting Executive Director, Face Mask Ban

Albany Session Analysis

The end of the 2024 New York State legislative session was largely overshadowed by Governor Hochul's directive to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to halt the implementation of congestion pricing indefinitely, leaving a budget shortfall of over a billion dollars for the MTA. The Governor and leaders of the Assembly and Senate have indicated that they may call a special session in fall 2024 to replace the funds in the MTA's budget. The Governor proposed a payroll tax on NYC businesses to replace the funds lost by delaying the implementation of congestion pricing, but the legislature did not adopt the plan or any other to fund the MTA before the close of session. The legislature passed 805 bills this session, which will now go to the Governor for her signature, veto, or negotiation of chapter amendments. Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies' full analysis of the 2024 session and its most significant accomplishments is available [here](#).

New Leadership in the Office of Cannabis Management

Governor Hochul has made three new leadership appointments to the New York State Office of Cannabis Management. As of May 2024, the agency is being overhauled due to ongoing challenges with the rollout of legalized cannabis. Felicia A. B. Reid has been appointed as Executive Deputy Director and Acting Executive Director, Susan Filburn has been appointed as Chief Administrative Officer, and Jessica Woolford has been promoted to Director of External Affairs. The Governor also launched a nationwide search for a permanent Executive Director of OCM.

New York Leaders and Governor to Explore Ban on Face Masks

Leaders in New York State are exploring a ban on face masks, following a series of hate crimes targeting Jewish New Yorkers by masked subway riders. The state had a longstanding anti-masking law since the 19th century, which was repealed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Hochul stated that she has begun discussions with Mayor Adams and state lawmakers about how to craft mask ban legislation, crafting exemptions for health and religious reasons.



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