

Federal: A Major Win for Housing

21st Century ROAD to Housing Act Signed Into Law

After nearly two years of advocacy by NAR and REALTOR associations across the country, the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act is now law. It's a sweeping, bipartisan package of roughly 50 provisions aimed at increasing housing supply, improving affordability, expanding access to homeownership, modernizing manufactured and rural housing finance, and strengthening VA home loan benefits. Supporters point to a national shortage of nearly 5 million homes and a first-time buyer age that has climbed to 40 as the urgency behind the bill.

Why it matters here: provisions aimed at streamlining federal permitting and construction delays, and expanding financing tools for manufactured and starter homes, could make a real difference in a market like ours where entry-level inventory is tight. We'll share implementation details and any local funding opportunities as they become available.

State: Albany and the Statehouse Races

Good Cause Eviction: Buffalo Still Hasn't Opted In — Advocates Are Pushing

New York's Good Cause Eviction law remains a local opt-in outside New York City. Roughly 15 municipalities statewide have adopted it, including Rochester, Albany, Ithaca, and Kingston. The Buffalo Common Council has previously signaled support for the concept but has not passed a local opt-in law, and tenant advocacy groups continue to push for a vote. Syracuse's Common Council rejected an opt-in earlier this year on a tie vote, which shows this isn't a foregone conclusion regionally.

Why it matters here: if Buffalo (or Erie/Niagara County towns and villages) opt in, it would change renewal, eviction, and rent-increase rules for many market-rate rental units in that municipality — directly affecting members who list, manage, or invest in rental property. Cheektowaga is currently considering it as well and just had a public hearing on it where we had good representation making the case against adopting Good Cause Eviction. We're tracking this closely and will alert you before any local vote.

A Big Ballot Year: Governor, Legislature, and More on November 3

New York shifted most local elections to even years, so this November's ballot is unusually full: Governor, Attorney General, Comptroller, all 63 State Senate seats, all 150 Assembly seats, three congressional districts touching our region (NY-23, NY-24, NY-26), and locally, Erie County Clerk, the full Erie County Legislature, Supreme Court justices, and Niagara County Legislature seats.

Why it matters here: state and county lawmakers set the policies that shape our business directly — property tax law, land use, STAR, and rental regulation among them. RPAC-endorsed candidate information will go out to members as races are finalized. If you haven't contributed to RPAC this year, now is the time — this is the mechanism that gives REALTORS a seat at the table.

Local: City of Buffalo Budget & Property Taxes

Buffalo Adopts 19% Property Tax Levy Increase

Mayor Sean Ryan's first budget proposed a 25.8% property tax levy increase to close a \$109 million structural deficit. After weeks of Common Council negotiation, the final adopted budget (passed 5-4 in late May) settled on a 19% levy increase — down from the original proposal but still substantial. For a home assessed at the city's median value of roughly \$208,000, that works out to about \$19 more per month than under the old rate. The city has posted a property tax calculator on its budget webpage so residents can estimate their own impact, and has pointed to STAR exemptions as a way to soften the hit for eligible homeowners.

Why it matters here: expect buyer and seller questions about carrying costs, especially on properties near the median assessed value. This is also a useful moment to remind clients to confirm their STAR registration status, since eligibility and benefit amounts vary by income and age.

Niagara County Radiological Survey: Disclosure Considerations

DEC and EPA's ongoing radiological survey of Niagara and Erie counties has identified elevated readings on a growing number of properties in the Town of Niagara — over 120 homes have received notices, with dozens more being sought for testing, and a handful of families are being relocated after indoor readings were confirmed. This remains geographically concentrated in western Niagara County, not a county-wide condition.

Why it matters here: if you have listings or buyers in the affected footprint, loop in your broker and legal counsel on disclosure questions early. We are working with counsel to determine whether MLS or state disclosure guidance needs updating, and will send a separate advisory once that's settled. In the meantime, direct specific technical questions to the DEC's project hotline rather than speculating with clients.

GET INVOLVED

- Contribute to RPAC — every dollar helps us advocate on the issues above.
- Reach out to me directly with questions on any item in this update, or to get involved in a local advocacy committee.

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