

NEWS Rensselaer County Legislature

Office of the Minority 270-2892

Minority Leader Ginny O'Brien 434-3347 ♦ Deputy Minority Leader Keith Hammond 283-3329

Flora Fasoldt 466-1703 ♦ Peter Grimm 273-1500 ♦ Kevin Harrington 330-9114 ♦ Brian Zweig 326-3980

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Fasoldt Wants Bags in Lieu of Fines to Go to the Needy

TROY—Legislator Flora Fasoldt filed a resolution calling on the Rensselaer County Legislature to make sure that the 3000 bags Price Chopper will be giving to the county as part of a settlement made by the Republican Majority will go to needy residents and not be used for political purposes.

“We raised a lot of questions about the Republican Majority’s settlement with Price Chopper—specifically why they decided to accept half of the amount of the fine levied—and have yet to get any acceptable answers,” commented Fasoldt.

A resolution passed by a vote along party lines at the last legislative session reduced the original amount of the fine against Price Chopper for unit pricing infractions from \$37,925 to \$18,396. The settlement also included a “donation” of 3000 reusable grocery bags. The Democratic Minority legislators’ requested the back-up information that usually accompanies a resolution, in this case to explain the reason for the settlement and to disclose the legal documentation. They received a letter dated May 13, the same day of their request, which refers to Price Chopper’s disagreement with the county’s “methodology” for conducting inspections and their willingness to litigate the issue. Rensselaer County’s enforcement procedure, specifically the fact that enforcement is carried out by an officer appointed by the legislature, differs from every other county in the state where pricing inspections are carried out by inspectors from the Bureau of Weights and Measures.

“I’m currently seeking an opinion from the State Attorney General about the legality of the Legislative Enforcement Officer carrying out these inspections,” continued Fasoldt. “If the Republican Majority was aware of a potential problem with the office held by their appointee, they should have resolved that problem years ago. Price Chopper seems to have made their agreement in good faith, especially if the Republican Majority in the Legislature isn’t willing the correct the underlying problem.”

Meanwhile, Legislator Fasoldt wants to be sure the 3000 bags Price Chopper will donate get used appropriately. The resolution she filed requires that the bags go to county agencies serving senior citizens and needy families to be distributed as those agencies deem appropriate.

Flora Fasoldt
466-1703