

Cuomo's \$118-million solid waste management plan hinges on the Legislature's passage of a unclaimed deposit law on the bottle industry. Cuomo complained companies are making millions of dollars on unclaimed beverage containers' deposits.

The Republican-controlled Senate has defeated the bill in previous years. "Every year our case gets stronger," Cuomo said.

Also, \$1.6 million is budgeted for security improvements, roof repairs and kitchen rehabilitation at the Arthur Kill Correctional Facility. "We have to do more with alternative forms of punishment," Cuomo said of prison overcrowding.

Cuomo's general \$28.4 billion budget was a 6.5 percent increase over last year's. It totals \$44.2 billion with federal aid included.

Aside from his increased emphasis on the environment, most of the governor's new budget initiatives were in education, housing and social services.

"We believe the amount and the objectives of the spending proposed are in the best interest of all the present and future members of the Family of New York," Cuomo said. "It funds the beginning of the 'Decade of the Child' and offers the state the promise of a sound economic future.

"I believe there will be very little controversy about the priorities we selected," Cuomo added. "Certainly there will be contention about what the solid waste program should be."

Republicans, including Sen. John Marchi, R-Ward Hill, Senate Finance Committee chairman, said Cuomo's budget does not offer enough in solving a state, not a local, garbage crisis.

The governor's proposed programs for children included:

● \$25 million for the first-year costs of a statewide voluntary prekindergarten program. The goal in five years is to have "universal" preschool programs throughout the state for an estimated 240,000 4-year-olds;

● \$325 million in additional aid for public schools, including an 8 percent increase for the city Board of Education;

● \$11.9 million increase for expanded Medicaid eligibility to poor families, including aid to pregnant women not covered under current guidelines;

● \$17 million in additional funds for the College Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and \$22 million in new funds for the Excellence in Teaching Program.

Also listed is \$305,000 for the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute in the city, a budget initiative pushed by Marchi and Assemblyman Eric Vitaliano, D-Dongan Hills. Last year, the institute was not included in Cuomo's budget, but the Legislature appropriated it in the final budget. The Institute was formed to encourage Italian-Americans in working class city neighborhoods to attend college.

Half of the \$670 million in the Infrastructure Trust fund is earmarked for housing, Cuomo said, while the other half going to maintain and rebuild the state's roads and bridges. The infrastructure fund, based on a windfall from changes in the federal tax code, was estimated to be \$850 million last year.

The housing program calls for \$105 million for permanent housing for the homeless, \$140 million to increase the supply of affordable housing, \$90 million to expand homeownership opportunities for low-income families and a \$500 million bond authorization for SONOMA maritimes for first-time homebuyers.

Cuomo recommended an \$11.8 million increase for the AIDS Institute and \$14.1 million for the Division of Substance Abuses (DSAS) to fight drug addiction and AIDS. The DSAS money would fund an additional 2,670 methadone treatment slots for drug abusers, now representing more than half of AIDS cases in the city.

Cuomo also plans on funding 10 more economic development zones to boost struggling areas throughout the state. Ten were selected last year. He did not say which communities were selected.

As expected, the Democratic Governor's sixth budget was criticized by Republicans and warmly praised by Democrats in the Legislature. "The governor's solid waste program has to be reshaped," said Marchi spokesman Gerald McLaughlin. "We have to do more for local governments (in financial assistance for solid waste management planning)." Assemblyman Robert Stran-

iere, R-Dongan Hills, agreed. "Cuomo is not including enough funds for solid waste," he said. "And the programs he offers address the problems in the other four boroughs, not Staten Island."

But Vitaliano and Assembly Speaker Melvin Miller, D-Brooklyn, said they believed Cuomo's budget was responsible. "At the starting point the governor agreed more had to be done in education — that's good," Vitaliano said.

He stressed that Cuomo's increased staffing at the DEC is good news for Staten Islanders. "The important thing is that he proposed increases in these areas. There is recognition by the governor that there was a deficit in what he has done in the past," Vitaliano added.

Miller sided with Cuomo in saying that funding for garbage disposal should mostly fall on local governments. "It's not for getting into the garbage disposal business," he said.

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