



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham Passes 62 Bills in Productive 2023 State Senate Session

PETE HARCKHAM June 16, 2023

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Senator Harckham speaking on the floor of the Senate

Four Bills Already Signed into Law, with More to Come

Albany, NY – With a focus on public safety and support for first responders, protecting the environment against climate change and ensuring the well-being of residents statewide concerning the overdose crisis and behavioral health issues, New York State Senator Pete Harckham announced the recently completed Senate session was his most productive since taking office in 2019.

Of the 180 bills Harckham introduced in 2023, the Senate approved 62, the full State Legislature approved 31, three have been signed into law already and one was included in the enacted FY2024 State Budget. It

is expected more executive approvals are forthcoming.

“Although this Senate session presented particular challenges, in the end I think we showed our resilience and ability to work together to solve problems that will help our communities grow stronger,” said Harckham. “We are continuing to make progress on so many important issues, and I am grateful to Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and my Senate colleagues for their support of the legislation I introduced this year. However, we cannot afford to be complacent, especially in regard to the climate crisis, and I’m looking forward to the next legislative session in 2024.”

The three Harckham bills approved by the Legislature and signed into law are:

- [S.856](#) Allows the state Department of Health (DOH) to claim federal coverage of and payment for digital therapeutics to treat Substance Use Disorder
- [S.821](#) Requires the DOH to publish annually on the department website details of opioids sold statewide
- [S.2222](#) Sets forth requirements for transparency of information and public hearings in the state’s plan to conserve 30% of its land by 2030 (the 30 by 30 Law)

Included in the FY2024 State Budget:

- [S.4531A](#) Authorizes the state Department of Transportation to conduct a traffic flow and safety study of Routes 35 and 202 from the Hudson River to the Connecticut border.

A number of Harckham’s bills deal with helping first responders, like [S.1176](#) and [S.1180](#), which make permanent benefits for volunteer firefighters with lung and heart disabilities; and [S.2707](#), a measure providing tax exemptions for volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers.

Three important other public safety bills received praise from family advocates:

- [S.2102](#) requires police officers to take temporary custody of firearms when responding to reports of family violence
- [S.6063](#) requires children’s non-regulated camps to check whether an employee or volunteer is listed on the sex offender registry
- [S.2084](#) prohibits censured forensic child custody evaluators from serving as expert witnesses in family court—received praise from family advocates.

“The safety of our residents and care for their well-being is a top priority,” said Harckham. “I’m proud of my efforts in supporting first responders statewide and in Senate District 40.”

As chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, Harckham introduced 16 bills that passed in the Senate, including eight that passed in both houses of the Legislature. Notable in bills awaiting the Governor’s signature is:

- [S.1725A](#) Protects Class C streams and fragile drinking water supplies
- [S.6604](#) Exempts geothermal boreholes at depths beyond five hundred feet requirements
- [S.3365](#) Requires disclosure of insurance information from pipeline developers
- [S.7457](#) Maintains current fishing license and permit limits
- [S.5957](#) Prohibits the application of pesticides to freshwater wetlands.

Harckham also introduced a number of important bills to protect the environment that await approval in Assembly, including:

- [S.6893](#) Prohibits the discharge of radioactive wastewater into the Hudson River
- [S.2994A](#) Prohibits fuel oil, grade four in any building or facility in the state after July 2026
- [S.5728A](#) Assists municipalities with water quality improvement of water bodies within the municipality managed by lake associations.

“In my first session as chair of the ‘Econ’ committee, it was important to coordinate our work with the goals laid out in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act,” said Harckham. “We will continue to press on with safeguards that protect our environment for the sake of our planet and future generations.”

Harckham, the former chair of the Senate Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Committee, introduced 25 Substance Use Disorder and behavioral health related bills in 2023. Four have been approved by the State Legislature, including [S.2099C](#)—Matthew’s Law—making fentanyl test kits, a critical harm reduction tool for preventing overdoses, available in pharmacies; and [S.5332](#) giving defendants the right to complete court-ordered treatment in nonreligious treatment programs.

Since 2019 Harckham has introduced 107 opioid crisis / Substance Use Disorder related bills.

Ready for the governor's signature are a number of bills aimed at helping residents in different ways:

- [S.5969](#) Expanding residential health care to medical fragile young adults
- [S.2988A](#) Requiring vine trimming for the maintenance of utility poles
- [S.3594](#) Eases petitioning requirement for public library budget votes
- [S.2702](#) Increases the age for operation of all-terrain vehicles
- [S.5967](#) Expands the definition of veteran to include career members of the armed forces for the purpose of the veterans for alternative tax exemptions.

Currently, there are 28 bills passed by both houses that are eligible for the governor's signature.