



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Walczyk

Senator Walczyk Takes Action Regarding Solar Farm Safety - Calls For Support From Committee Chairman

MARK WALCZYK August 3, 2023

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Senator Walczyk speaks to Chief Lipczynski on scene of a Convergent Solar Farm Fire

In the wake of yet another fire caused by lithium-ion batteries at a solar farm in New York State, Senator Mark Walczyk has introduced legislation to make fighting these fires more safe for first responders.

The fire at the Convergent Solar Farm in Chaumont has shown yet again that as these farms become more prominent, education and training is needed to equip both career and volunteer first responders with the tools to fight these emergency situations. Jefferson County Emergency Services told the Senator that it took up to 6-8 hours before the battery manufacturer could provide data regarding what materials were in the batteries and how much of each material was present. These 6-8 hours are critical in an emergency situation and not having this information present could have resulted in dire consequences.

Introduced by Senator Walczyk and carried in the Assembly by Assemblyman Scott Gray, Bill S.7622 would mandate that every solar farm in the State shall have the safety data sheet (SDS) conspicuously posted in any area on such a solar farm that would likely be accessed by emergency responders in the case of a fire or other emergency. First Responders would then be able to pull up on scene of an emergency situation, examine the posted placard or SDS, and make quick informed decisions on how to proceed.

Furthermore, Senator Walczyk has written a letter to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Telecommunications, Senator Kevin Parker. This letter calls on the Chairman to support this common sense legislation and acknowledge that as Downstate and Albany Democrats push us deeper into the abyss of terrible energy policy, we need to be proactive in passing legislation to keep the Rural New York safe.

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*"The Governor and Democrat party bosses have created a cult of environmental extremism that supersedes both logic and the environment," said **Senator Walczyk**. "This week, their hasty 'Climate Action' policy put the people of Chaumont and the Town of Lyme in harm's way. Emergency services had limited information on the ground for one reason: the NY's one-*

party-rule has forced batteries into our communities which shouldn't be on the market in the first place. Our legislation will at least give emergency services the information they need on the next disaster scene; it's the least we can do."

"This legislation is one component of a multiple component issue that we will be looking to resolve. Making sure our Emergency personnel is completely equipped with the right equipment and information needed to respond rapidly and efficiently is the priority, said **Assemblyman Scott Gray**. "As this legislation moves forward we will be working closely with the Governor's task force in order to ensure public safety and health are paramount, when developing battery storage sites. This will help prevent and/or mitigate these fires from occurring in the future."

"There needs to be strong indication regarding lithium and how it's used in our community across the board," said **Town of Lyme Supervisor Terry Countryman**. "It's in your back pocket, it's in your car, it's everywhere. We need to learn how to fight it best, and how we're going to bring it into our communities. Thank you to Assemblyman Gray and Senator Walczyk for introducing legislation to tackle this new found problem."

Senator Mark Walczyk represents the 49th Senate District, which includes the entire counties of Jefferson, Lewis, Hamilton and Fulton. As well as parts of Oswego, St. Lawrence, and Herkimer counties. Sign up for exclusive updates from the Senator via his weekly newsletter by clicking [HERE](#) or by emailing walczyk@nysenate.gov.