



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

# **Senator Webb Celebrates Champions of Sustainability at Her 2024 Earth Month Reception**

[Lea Webb](#)

April 30, 2024

ISSUE:

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**(Binghamton, NY)** – On April 30th, 2024, Senator Lea Webb hosted her inaugural Earth Month Reception at the State Office Building in Binghamton where she honored a distinguished group of individuals, organizations, and small businesses for their unwavering dedication to sustainability and environmental stewardship. The event recognized those who have made significant contributions to combating climate change, advancing sustainable agricultural practices, and addressing food insecurity within the community.

Awards and recognitions were presented to:

- **Amelia LoDolce**, *New York State Senate Commendation Award Recipient*
- **Dr. Stanley Whittingham**, *New York State Senate Commendation Award Recipient*
- **Christa Núñez**, *The Learning Farm*, *New York State Senate Empire Award for Business Excellence*
- **Mike McMahon**, *McMahon's EZ Acres Dairy Farm*, *New York State Senate Empire Award for Business Excellence*
- **Don Barber**, *New York State Senate Proclamation*
- **Lisa Bloodnick**, *New York State Senate Proclamation*
- **Diane Cohen**, *New York State Senate Proclamation*
- **Brian Eden**, *New York State Senate Proclamation*
- **Adam Flint**, *New York State Senate Proclamation*
- **Scott Lauffer**, *New York State Senate Proclamation*

- **Gay Nicholson**, *New York State Senate Proclamation*
- **Jan Norman**, *New York State Senate Proclamation*
- **Irene Weiser**, *New York State Senate Proclamation*
- **Greater Good Grocery**, *New York State Senate Certificate of Achievement*
- **Mrs. Gloria Marshall**, *New York State Senate Certificate of Achievement*
- **Beth Roberts**, *New York State Senate Certificate of Achievement*
- **Schaefer's Gardens**, *New York State Senate Certificate of Achievement*

"These dedicated individuals, organizations, and small businesses advocate, educate, and promote sustainable practices that are crucial for the health and safety of our community and planet, along with economic advancement," **said Senator Lea Webb**. "As a member of the New York State Senate's Committee on Agriculture and an advocate for our environment, I am immensely proud to recognize and support these community leaders who tirelessly work to improve systems that not only safeguard our earth but also enhance our collective quality of life. Celebrating these champions of sustainability reaffirms our commitment to building a thriving and resilient community, state and world for future generations."

*Quotes in alphabetical order:*

**Don Barber said**, "Years ago, before my decades long career in public service, I led the effort to create the Finger Lakes National Forest and the fight to end landfilling garbage in Tompkins County. During my tenure as Town Supervisor, the Town of Caroline became the second municipality in NYS to purchase 100% of its electricity from renewable sources and also facilitated the solarizing of many Caroline houses. I was the founding chair of the Tompkins County Council of Governments and the founding President of the Tompkins County Health Insurance Consortium. Currently, I chair the Tompkins County Food Policy Council. Additionally, my wife Rita and I own and operate an organic, draft horse powered farm that is completely solarized and provides our family with healthy food from healthy plants."

**Lisa Bloodnick said**, "My husband and I own and operate a small, diverse, horse-powered produce farm, Bloodnick Farm, in Apalachin NY. We have operated our Community Supported Agriculture program for 30 years and have been long-time vendors at the Vestal Farmers Market for 32 years. I am a lifelong native of Apalachin and a graduate of Binghamton University with my BS in Environmental

Studies. I still maintain a close relationship with the university. My greatest joy is my 3 children, all who have stayed involved in agriculture to varying degrees. I am very involved in seed saving and maintain a large collection of rare seeds. I enjoy teaching and photography in my spare time!"

**Diane Cohen said,** "I feel so fortunate to have been asked to help lead the effort to reduce waste through reuse nearly 19 years ago by Tompkins County leadership. Through our unique partnership, we have learned that there is enormous potential to reduce waste through reuse, and even more impactfully, there are vast opportunities for justice and equity through community connection, education, collaboration, skill- and confidence-building, and career development in the world of reuse. I am so proud of our organization's pioneering accomplishments, and grateful for my hard-working coworkers and dedicated volunteers. Reuse is about positive community engagement and empowerment, and we are excited about working with our neighbors to help them get their own reuse systems in place. I hope our work at Finger Lakes ReUse inspires others to get more reuse going throughout the Southern Tier."

**Brian Eden said,** "My public interest work has been centered in the Southern Tier. Born in Elmira, attended college in Binghamton, and then resided more than 50 years in the Ithaca area. I have devoted much of my efforts to reducing toxic exposures to protect public health. I have had a love for nature throughout my life. My great grandparents settled a hardscrabble farm where I spent some formative years. We raised our children in a fairly remote area next to a State Forest where we lived in the midst of nature for 26 years. I so much appreciate this recognition. Senator Webb and her staff have been very supportive of my work."

**Adam Flint said,** "As a long-time resident of the Southern Tier, I'm proud to have contributed to the sustainability of our beautiful region. Through NEST's Energy Corps program, we have hosted more than 125 college students who have gone onto rewarding careers. Our energy education programs have supported hundreds and educated thousands of residents on how to make clean energy improvements on their buildings. And, through fiscal sponsorship, we have helped important local organizations such as the Southern Door Community Land Trust and the Tier Energy Network incubate and become independent. I am honored to be recognized by Senator Lea Webb, who for many years has been one of our community's most important and effective leaders."

**Scott Lauffer said,** “I have lived in the Southern Tier most of my adult life and feel a love and connection to it. We have much to appreciate with the natural beauty of our region and much to take care of. I have been part of worthwhile efforts in making our environment better, including leadership in the Sierra Club for over ten years, active participant with IBM Spill Stakeholders, organizing three bus trips to climate marches, coordinating a VINES community garden for over ten years, leading a water monitoring effort with NY Water Sentinels for five years and more recently acting as a coordinator in the Binghamton Move Out Project. I'm just one of many who strive to make our corner of the planet a better place.”

**Amelia LoDolce said,** “I am honored to receive this recognition for my work over the years in various sustainability efforts, including through Volunteers Improving Neighborhood Environments (VINES) and my position as Sustainable Development Planner for the City of Binghamton. I moved to the area 25 years ago to attend Binghamton University as an undergraduate and ultimately found my home here. As a student, I was drawn into the community by the late Professor Dick Andrus as well as other faculty and community members who were deeply invested in environmental and social justice efforts locally. I feel deeply fortunate to live in a largely walkable and bikeable urban environment that is only minutes away from beautiful county and state parks, and love the sense of community you find here when you get involved.”

**Gay Nicholson,** "I am a child of the northern woods, and since my arrival in the Finger Lakes 45 years ago I have felt the call of stewardship to protect and defend the health of this beautiful region. While I was in grad school, this took the form of sustainable agriculture research, and volunteering to help protect local lands from abuse, lead the ban on burn barrels, and help children develop a loving respect for our ecosystem. After a few years working on global climate negotiations, I had the chance to step into the work of leading the Finger Lakes Land Trust, helping to permanently protect hundreds of diverse acres across our region while maturing the organization so that it could be here to carry out its sacred trust into the future. This work is critically important, but potentially meaningless if we don't work on changing the human culture and systems that threaten the viability of our life support system. For the past 20 years, while leading Sustainable Finger Lakes, my goal has been to help people 'connect the dots' and take a systems approach to find ways to thrive as humans while maintaining the integrity and resilience of our home planet."

**Christa Núñez said,** “It has been my immense honor to serve the people and land of the Finger Lakes of the Southern Tier in supporting young people and their families to be able to engage deeply in communal ways of sharing land and food. This community has afforded me so many opportunities to collaborate with some of the strongest thinkers and activists of our time. I have learned so much from people who are working on the ground to make this world a better place in terms of how we serve the people most impacted by food apartheid, redlining, land and labor theft, urbanization, reservationization, and systemic racism. Purchasing land and creating a community land trust for new BIPOC farmers to live, grow food, and raise their children on provides me the greatest joy — akin to getting married to Pete and having children of our own and raising them on the farm in ways that enhance their spiritual connection to their Creator, one another, and the land, people, animals, plant and fungal life all around them. The fact that I was enabled to go back to school and develop myself as a farmer scholar as a Ph.D. student at Cornell University is another testimony to the power and forward-thinking of this region and its institutions of higher learning. I look forward to continuing my service in this unbelievably rich and vibrant region to developing deeper connections with public servants like Senator Webb and the individuals and organizations throughout this area who are making a difference.”

**Beth Roberts said,** “I’m honored to receive this award from Senator Webb, particularly alongside so many dedicated individuals committed to sustainability and environmental stewardship. This recognition reaffirms my belief in the power of community-driven action and the importance of collective efforts in addressing pressing environmental challenges. Cornell Cooperative Extension plays a vital role in promoting sustainable practices, educating community members about environmental issues, and fostering partnerships to address local challenges. We are deeply committed to this work and appreciate the recognition alongside our community partners.”

**Dr. Stanley Whittingham said,** “I am honored to receive this award, and am grateful for all the support the University and the State has given me and my group to build an international reputation for Binghamton. Now with the help of the Federal and State Governments we are able to take action and rebuild the manufacturing strength that Binghamton and the Southern Tier is known for. I would like to thank Senator Webb and all our elected officials for making this possible.”

**Irene Weiser said,** "As should be obvious after yesterday's 80+ degree day in April, we are in the midst of climate disruption the likes of which we have not seen before. It is both an ethical and existential imperative that we make changes before it is too late. To those who think it is hopeless I am here to say it is not. We have the solutions. To those who think it will cost too much, I say the ravages of climate disruption will cost far more. Now more than ever we need strong leadership -both in our communities and in Albany to push forward on the changes we need and to hold the polluters accountable. I am enormously grateful for our partnership with Senator Lea Webb -most recently for her clear-sighted leadership in sponsoring and passing the bill to ban CO2 fracking, as well as her stance against the outrageous NYSEG rate hikes, and efforts to hold the utility accountable. And I am incredibly honored to be recognized for the work Fossil Free Tompkins has done and to be included among this group of dedicated and deserving advocates. I look forward to continuing to work together with all of you for the clean and just future we all deserve. "

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**[Click HERE for Photos from the 2024 Earth Day Reception](#)**