



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Senator Liz Krueger Calls for Environmental Action on Earth Day Urges Passage of Key Environmental Legislation

LIZ KRUEGER April 21, 2008

Today, in support of Earth Day, State Senator Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan), called for New York to take action for the environment.

"Earth Day has always been a time when all Americans are asked to think about how they can become more environmentally friendly," said Senator Krueger. "On this day, it is only fair that we expect the same from our elected representatives. That is why I am calling on my colleagues in the Senate to step up, and put New York at the front of the environmental movement. There are a number of legislative proposals, that could have a huge impact on the future."

Since arriving in Albany Senator Krueger has made environmental issues a top priority. To date, Senator Krueger has sponsored legislation calling for an update to New York's returnable container act (S7126), a bill banning Styrofoam (S6402), a bill that calls for recycling of rechargeable batteries (S6469), and a bill that requires cigarette filters to be biodegradable (S3354).

By updating the returnable container act, more commonly known as the "Bottle Bill", New York would be enhancing one of the most effective pieces of environmental legislation to date. Bill S7126 would increase recycling by expanding the number of bottles covered to

include non-carbonated beverages like water and flavored drinks. The bill would also create more of an incentive to recycle by increasing the deposit to 10 cents. Finally, a portion of unclaimed deposits, which are currently kept by the beverage industry, would be put in the Environmental Protection Fund. This would generate millions of dollars annually for many important environmental initiatives across the state.

Senator Krueger has also introduced the Food Service Waste Reduction Act (S6402). This bill would phase out the use of polystyrene products, more commonly known as Styrofoam. Polystyrene is a notorious pollutant because of the difficulty to either reuse or recycle it. Furthermore, Styrofoam packs our landfills since it takes many years to fully decompose. Earlier this month, Senator Krueger called for vote of the full Senate on the Styrofoam ban. Unfortunately for the citizens of New York, this motion was defeated along party lines, with the Senate Republicans unanimously opposed to it.

New York needs rechargeable batteries to be recycled because they can contain toxic metals, such as cadmium, lead, and mercury. When these batteries are not properly disposed of, they can leak toxic pollutants into our lakes, streams and land. That is why Senator Kruger sponsored bill S6496, which would require rechargeable battery manufacturers to work in partnership with New York retailers to set up a free, easily accessible recycling network for residents.

Cigarette filters are one of the most common causes of litter on our streets and parks. S3354 would address this problem by requiring them to be biodegradable. This would be both a practical and economic solution to this problem.

Senator Krueger noted, "Each of these bills would reduce the amount of waste filling our landfills and littering the streets of New York. We must take advantage of such common sense legislation, that exemplifies the policy of reduce, reuse, and recycle."

Senator Krueger also highlighted some of the legislative priorities of Environmental Advocates of New York. "Environmental Advocates of New York have been a voice for all New Yorkers who care about the future of our planet. I applaud them on their efforts and look forward to continuing to work with them," said Senator Krueger.

The three legislative initiatives that Senator Krueger specifically touched on were the Climate Change Solutions Program Act and Fund (S5347, and S5371), Wetlands Protections (S3835), and the State Green Building Construction Act (S5442).

The Climate Change Solutions Program Act and Fund would require that money generated from the selling of emission allowances would be designated for environmental initiatives, such as energy efficiency programs and the development of clean, renewable energy sources.

Wetlands Protections is one of Environmental Advocates for New York's super bills. The bill would give the Department of Environmental Conservation the authority to regulate fresh water wetlands which are important to maintaining the quality of drinking water in New York.

The State Green Building Construction Act will require the state to follow green building principles for all new construction and major renovations. Green buildings use resources more efficiently and effectively. They also reduce their impact on the environment by using recyclable or recycled materials. Green buildings also take advantage of renewable and energy efficient power generating systems.

Senator Krueger stressed, "We do not have to wait for others to take action. The proposed bills for New York will make a difference, and set a precedent, for the whole world. Being green is all of our responsibility, from the federal, to the state, to the local level."

