



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Senator Liz Krueger and Senate Democrats Celebrate Earth Day by Passing a Series of Bills Aimed at Protecting Our Environment

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April 21, 2010

ISSUE:

- [Energy](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Renewable Energy](#)
- [Electricity](#)
- [Going Green](#)



For Immediate Release | April 21, 2010

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(New York, NY) Senator Liz Krueger and her colleagues in the Democratic Senate Majority passed a package of “Earth Day 2010” bills yesterday, marking a significant victory for the health of our environment. The bills will enhance New York’s stature as a “green” leader in a 21st Century economy and will implement protections to reduce waste and pollution.

Included in the package is a Rechargeable Batteries Recycling Program, sponsored by Senator Krueger.

“The Democratic Conference took some much needed steps towards protecting our environment now and in the future,” Senator Krueger said. “Issues involving our environment's health have always been of great importance to me, which is why I am proud to sponsor the recently passed bill that requires rechargeable battery manufacturers to work in partnership with New York retailers to set up a free, easily accessible recycling network for residents. I am happy to honor Earth Day with this measure and I will continue to fight for the health of our environment beyond the celebration of just one day.”

Senator Antoine Thompson (D-parts of Erie and Niagara Counties), Chair of the Senate's Environmental Conservation Committee said, "In 2010, the New York State Senate has extended and amplified the legacy of Earth Day in a way that will make our lives, richer and safer, while reducing our footprint on the planet."

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-Westchester) said, "I am pleased to stand with my colleagues in support of legislation that will establish statewide recycling programs, ban the use of dangerous chemicals in daycare facilities and inform consumers about the environmental impact of products they purchase. As millions across the nation celebrate Earth Day later this week, New Yorkers can also be proud of the progress made towards adopting policies to protect our environment and cultivate new jobs based on green technology for future generations."

Senator Daniel Squadron (D-Brooklyn/Manhattan) said, "It is more important than ever that we use creative, cutting-edge solutions to protect our environment and ensure a cleaner, safer, and healthier planet. I am pleased that the Senate Majority has demonstrated its commitment with this package of innovative bills, including legislation that will make New York the first state in the nation to create a new standard to better help consumers understand how much fuel a car will use by requiring a display of the gallons of gas per thousand miles a new car will use."

Senator Brian X. Foley (D-Blue Point), sponsor of the prohibition on the use of chemicals at day care centers and school grounds said, "I am proud to sponsor this major legislation and lead the fight to protect our children from harmful chemicals. Given that pesticides contain dangerous chemicals that can severely harm children during crucial developmental stages and the availability of cost-effective alternatives, it is simply unacceptable to continue to use pesticides to care for fields and playgrounds where our children spend hours playing. With the passage of this legislation, parents can see their children off to school with more peace of mind, knowing they will be safe from hazardous chemicals that can cause permanent damage," said Sen. Foley, who serves on the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee. "I urge the governor to sign this bill into law as soon as possible."

Majority Conference Leader John Sampson said, "The programs and safeguards we are putting into effect are necessary to preserve the health and well-being of both New Yorkers and the environment. These initiatives are long overdue and I am pleased that our conference could be the ones to take care of them. With this package we ensure the sustainability of New York's environment."

Bills in this package:

- S3593-B / Krueger: Institutes a rechargeable battery producer- and retailer-sponsored take-back program at no costs to consumers.
- S6141-B / Squadron: Requires auto dealerships to post a Gallons Per Mile Fuel Savings Guide within the dealership which presents information developed by the DEC.
- S6047-A / Thompson: Establishes a comprehensive Statewide electronic equipment reuse and recycling program.
- S4983-C / Foley: Limits pesticide exposures for school- and daycare-aged children by prohibiting certain outdoor, non-essential applications on playgrounds, turf, and athletic or playing fields.
- S3296-G / Thompson: Prohibits the manufacture, distribution and sale of child care products such as pacifiers, bottles and sippy cups which contain Bisphenol.
- S5119 / Stewart-Cousins: Reduces the State's waste by prohibiting the purchase and use of non-recyclable paper/mailling products.
- S3788-C / Libous: Creates a cancer mapping program which overlays reported incidences of cancer with environmental facilities.

Rob Moore, Executive Director of Environmental Advocates of New York said, "Earth Day is the time to celebrate victories on behalf of New York's environment and this year the State Senate has many legislative achievements to point to. Among the green measures the Senate approved is one of the environmental community's highest priorities -- E-waste recycling legislation which will reduce the toxic electronic waste that goes into our landfills."

Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director of the Citizens Campaign for the Environment said, "As we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day, let us reflect on the problems of the past to implement solutions for the future. Actions this legislature takes can and will affect tomorrow. That's why it is critical to move forward with recycling our e-waste, removing pesticides from school playing fields, and forging a renewable energy path. These issues embrace all walks of life, all political spectrums, and all generations."

Marcia Bystryn, president of the New York League of Conservation Voters said, "From safeguarding New York's children to improving the way we manage our solid waste, this package of Earth Day legislation is an important step toward a cleaner, more sustainable New York. We applaud Environmental Conservation Chair Thompson, Majority Leader Sampson and the sponsors of these bills for their commitment to protecting New York's air, water and natural heritage."

Laura Haight, senior environmental associate with NYPIRG said, "We are delighted that the Senate is moving a package of environmental bills on Earth Day this year. This could be the first time in the 20-year history of Earth Day Lobby Day that both houses bring key priority bills of New York's environmental community to the floor for a vote, such as e-waste recycling and restoring the public's right to enforce the SEQRA law."

There is historic significance to this legislative package beyond what the bills themselves are accomplishing, as April 20th is the 20th anniversary of Earth Day Lobby Day in Albany, and Thursday is the 40th Anniversary of national Earth Day. Despite these successes, this is the first time that passage of environmental legislation has been taken up by the Legislature marking Earth Day - a testament to how the Majority has embraced its role as stewards to the environment.

Recognizing the economic opportunities for our State through the enactment of fiscally and environmentally responsible legislation, this year's budget resolution passed by the Majority restored funding to the Environmental Protection Fund and our State parks. Last year Senate Democrats implemented the Bigger Better Bottle Bill, dramatically cutting waste heading to landfills and establishing a designated fund for environmental re-development, which had been stalled in committee for nearly a decade.

Rechargeable Battery Recycling Program / S3593-B

Rechargeable batteries are ubiquitous in the electronic products we use every day, but it is a growing problem, as most people do not understand the proper way to dispose or recycle them. Products such as cellular and cordless phones, digital cameras, MP3 players, laptop computers, remote control toys, electric razors and cordless power tools all run on rechargeable batteries. They are advantageous in the sense that they cut down on waste by being reusable and also save energy by not using electricity, but when these batteries are not disposed of properly they can

have extremely detrimental effects on the environment. Senator Krueger's bill creates a rechargeable battery take-back program to resolve this problem at no cost to consumers.

The vote was 59-2.

Informing Consumers with Fuel Efficiency Guide / 6141-B

By implementing the use of a Gallons Per Mile Fuel Savings Guide in auto dealerships consumers will be better informed and encouraged to purchase more fuel efficient vehicles. Such vehicles can help save money, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy security and oil dependence, and increase energy sustainability. The Gallons Per Mile estimate that this legislation will require to be posted in all auto dealerships provides consumers a much more accurate and realistic figure when making decisions regarding vehicle purchasing. This bill is looking toward the future sustainability of the environment and well-being of our State, while helping New Yorkers save money immediately.

The vote was 35-26.

Establishing E-Waste Recycling Program / S6047-A

E-waste currently represents the fastest growing category of waste in the municipal solid waste stream. While technology has developed at a meteoric rate, the disposal of the products has lagged behind and is now starting to take its toll. Consumer demand for the latest cutting-edge electronics products, coupled with the devices' relatively short life-spans, has created an overwhelming growth in the amount of e-waste our State produces. In order to provide a solution to this problem, Senator Thompson sponsored this legislation which will create a Statewide electronic equipment reuse and recycling program which encourages the cost of end-of-life management to be incorporated into the product prices.

Chris Burger, Solid Waste Committee Chair of the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter said, "By passing the E-Waste bill, the Senate has started an innovative trend in NY that goes beyond reducing waste. The more responsibility electronics manufacturers have for recycling their products, the more motivated they will be to design products that are durable, easy to recycle and less toxic."

The vote was 61-0.

Limiting Pesticide Use on Playing Fields in Schools and Daycare / S4983-C

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, pesticides can cause a long list of damages to people, animals and the environment. Its use can cause nervous-, reproductive- and immune-system damage, is linked to cancer and birth defects, can contaminate air and drinking water, and can be detrimental to the well-being of wildlife. Our youth in particular is vulnerable to pesticide exposures for several reasons, including their physiology and rapid growth. Because of these reasons, Senator Foley's legislation will limit the use of pesticides at schools and daycares by prohibiting its use on playgrounds, turf and athletic or playing fields.

The vote was 39-22.

Eliminating BPA from Child Care Products / S3296-G

Bisphenol A (BPA) is a principle component in the production of polycarbonate rigid plastic and epoxy resins, which are commonly used in child care products such as pacifiers, bottles and sippy cups. Studies have found that BPA mimics the human hormone estrogen, which disrupts the endocrine system in a child's body and is linked to common ailments including heart disease, immune system disruption, brain deterioration, type-2 diabetes, cancer and obesity. During the early years of development, the chemical seems to have the greatest affect, which is why this legislation is directed to child care products. The effects of BPA have long been disputed, but this legislation finally takes the step of eliminating its use, which ensures healthier future generations.

The vote was 60-1.

Prohibiting the State from Purchasing Non-Recycled Paper / S5119

New York State, with more than 80 State entities, is a major purchaser and user of stationary and paper products. Moreover, statistics show that only 50-percent of paper products are being recycled. Now that recycled paper is an easily attainable commodity, the State should purchase only recycled paper to contribute to the ongoing efforts to transition entities to the green initiative. Senator Stewart-Cousins' legislation will prohibit the purchase and use of non-recyclable paper and mailing products.

The vote was 40-21.

Mapping Cancer Rates / 3788-C

The evidence, suggesting that there are links between exposures to manmade toxics in our environment and certain cancers, is mounting. The problem in the past, however, is that when there have been incidences of cancer which correlate with a certain environment have not been documented. This legislation will require the Department of Health, in consultation with the DEC and the technical advisory group, to create a cancer mapping program in the State which tracks these incidences. By studying these correlations, possible causes of cancer may be revealed, which can help prevent future cancer incidences.

The vote was 61-1.