



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Home Heating Hike Looms

JAMES L. SEWARD June 18, 2010

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ALBANY, 06/18/10 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I- Oneonta) today expressed concern that legislation approved in the senate this week will likely cause a dangerous shortage in the supply of home heating oil for upstate communities and force home heating costs to rise 20 percent this winter.

“Families across upstate have already cut to the bone, and this legislation will do nothing but leave many more in the cold this winter,” said Senator Seward. **“People on fixed incomes, like many of our senior citizens, will be forced to choose between buying food, medication, and heating their homes.”**

The legislation (senate bill 1145) would mandate the reduction of sulfur content of #2 heating oil by 2012. Senator Seward voted in favor of a Republican amendment that would have pushed the compliance date back by two years to provide adequate time for refineries to adopt the new standards and prevent a dangerous shortage in supply that would drastically increase costs for upstate consumers. The amendment failed.

A recent study estimated that the bill would result in an increase in the price of home heating fuel by 20 to 30 cents per gallon, costing upstate consumers \$1 billion. Consumers could be forced to pay 60 cents more per gallon during a particularly cold winter, costing the average upstate family up to an additional \$600 to heat their homes. The bill also exempted #6 heating oil, which is primarily used in high rise apartment buildings in New York City

“The bill is grossly unfair to upstate New Yorkers and a gift to urban apartment dwellers. Once again, our farms and upstate manufacturers will see the cost of doing business rise in what is already the most overtaxed, fee-laden state in the nation,” Seward continued.

The amendment supported by Seward would have mandated a reduction in sulfur content, to 500 parts per million, by July 1, 2014, which is consistent with the policy adopted in surrounding states. The legislation that passed requires a reduction to 15 parts per million by July 1, 2012.

The majority of New York's home heating oil is supplied by East Coast and Gulf Coast refineries. Engineering evaluations show that it would take at least four years to install the proper infrastructure and processing capacity to meet the new mandated reductions in sulfur content.

“One of upstate New York’s greatest assets is our clean air and breathtaking scenery. People live here and vacation here because of the natural beauty that surrounds us. I want to safeguard our environment and feel that an amended version of this bill would provide the necessary protections. I implore the governor to veto this legislation if it reaches his desk and send it back to the legislature so that we can correct the shortcomings and stave off an upstate crisis,” Seward concluded.