



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph E. Robach

Senate Passes Bill to Help Prevent Environmental Crimes: Legislation Sponsored by Senator Joe Robach

JOSEPH E. ROBACH March 5, 2014

| ISSUE: **ENVIRONMENT, POLLUTION**

The New York State Senate today passed legislation that would prosecute those who intentionally or recklessly damage the environment while committing another crime. The bill ([S1016](#)), sponsored by Senator Joseph Robach (R-C-I, Rochester), would hold criminals accountable for the financial and environmental damage caused by their actions when they contaminate or destroy the quality of water, soil, or air.

During one incident in the Town of Greece, Monroe County, criminals broke into a spare electrical transformer owned by Rochester Gas and Electric, and stole copper to resell for profit. During the process of accessing the copper, 4,800 gallons of oil was drained from the transformer, causing land and water contamination of the surrounding environment at an estimated remediation cost of over \$1 million. There are no current Criminal Mischief statutes that adequately address environmental devastation.

“So often, when a crime is committed, we are so focused on seeking justice that we tend to forget about the long-term effects the crime could have on our environment,” said Senator Robach. “With appropriate penalties, I hope this bill will hold criminals accountable for damaging the environment or contaminating our water, soil or air.”

This bill would make crimes that result in large-scale environmental damage - either intentionally or recklessly - a class C felony.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.