



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

Release: Avella Marks Earth Day by Introducing Battery Recycling Bill

TONY AVELLA April 22, 2015

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(ALBANY, NY) Today, State Senator Tony Avella was joined by Eliot Seol, an 11-year-old student from Queens, to introduce a bill (S.4522) that would require New York State to establish a recycling stewardship program for all “single use” batteries. The bill was drafted by Senator Avella, who serves as Vice Chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, after Eliot brought the idea to the Senator’s attention.

Last year, Eliot – now in fifth grade at PS 205 in Douglaston, Queens – contacted Senator Avella’s District Office and requested a meeting where he could relay concerns with how batteries are potentially harmful to the Earth if not correctly recycled. His commitment to bettering the environment was recently rewarded when he was named the Region 2 Honorable Mention winner of the 2014 President’s Environmental Youth Award. Eliot presented his ideas to Senator Avella, who decided to introduce legislation modeled off the student’s concerns about a lack of battery recycling stations and the impact it has on the environment.

The legislation would require that all batteries be properly recycled in order to cut down on the environmental impact of certain chemicals and toxic metals they may contain from being dumped into landfills as garbage. New York State law currently requires that only rechargeable batteries be recycled, leaving millions of other household batteries each year to ultimately be disposed of in landfills and other garbage areas. This practice creates unnecessary waste from items that could in fact be recycled and reused.

Many household batteries that are used in every day electronics can contain metals such as zinc, lead, cadmium, nickel and manganese. These elements can emit high amounts of contamination into the environment when batteries are thrown away as garbage instead of properly disposed of through a safe recycling program. If passed, this legislation would mandate that New York implement a “single use” battery recycling program, similar to ones already in place in Vermont and Connecticut, to ensure that all batteries are recycled in a manner that is safe for the environment.

“When Eliot first came to me to discuss his concerns about protecting our environment, I was blown away by his dedication to this cause at such a young age. Today, I can think of no better way to celebrate Earth Day than to share Eliot’s vision with others. Toxic batteries being thrown away as garbage is just one way our environment continues to be harmed each

and every day. If we can reduce the impact these items have on the environment, we can contribute to an ever-increasing, world-wide effort to protect the Earth before it is too late. I am proud to be able to introduce this legislation today, and I urge all New Yorkers, of any age, to follow in Eliot's footsteps," said Senator Avella.