



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

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The commute from my St. Albans home to Albany has always been an interesting one, and I've driven it enough times that the whole two-plus hours can seem like a blur. With the coming of Spring, however, the drive is much more lively and effervescent.

The blooms and green everywhere are particularly beautiful on Earth Day. Today, I attended a ceremony honoring Earth Day at Washington Park in Albany. Environmental groups had come together to celebrate the passage of the Bigger Better Bottle Bill, which was hailed as a **major environmental victory**:

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This momentous achievement is the first major overhaul of the state's bottle deposit law since it was created in 1982...The update expands New York's bottle return law to include water bottles, which comprise nearly a quarter of all beverages sold in New York. The law also requires beverage companies to return 80% of the unclaimed bottle and can deposits to the state, generating upwards of \$115 million annually for the General Fund.

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"The restorations to the Environmental Protection Fund and passage of the Bigger Better Bottle Bill are big successes for New York's environment," said Marcia Bystryn, president of the New York League of Conservation Voters. "We applaud Gov. David Paterson, Speaker Sheldon Silver, Majority Leader Malcolm Smith, Assemblyman Robert Sweeney and Senator Antoine Thompson for their leadership and the importance they place on environmental progress, even in these difficult economic times."