



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

Senate Deputy Leader Gianaris Announces Senate Passes His Bills Protecting The Environment And Keeping Children Safe

MICHAEL GIANARIS April 29, 2021

| ISSUE: [CLIMATE CHANGE](#), [CLIMATE CRISIS](#), [PARKS](#), [#LEADFREENY](#), [ENVIRONMENT](#)

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ALBANY, N.Y. – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris announced the Senate passed two of his bills to address public health and environmental concerns. Senator Gianaris' bills were passed right after the world celebrated Earth Week, a 7-day long observation of fighting the climate crisis, and on the eve of President Biden's first address to Congress where he is expected to promote efforts to replace lead pipes throughout the country.

“The clock is ticking on our planet’s health and we must take aggressive action today if we are to solve the climate crisis,” said **Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris**. “I am pleased the State Senate has made protecting our environment a priority since day one, including passing the nation-leading CLCPA, and continues to fight for even better and more creative solutions to our shared existential challenge.”

Senator Gianaris passed these bills this week:

Mandating Lead Testing in Parks: [S.1256-A](#) requires that all drinking water fixtures in state and local parks be tested for lead every three years and, if lead contamination is found, abatements need to be made within 90 days.

New York City alone has more than 3,500 drinking water fixtures in city parks, before even considering those in state and local parks throughout the state. Lead exposure can cause serious illness and injury to children, and scientists have recently stated consuming lead at any level can be a risk. President Biden has made eliminating lead pipes a major priority of his American Jobs Plan currently before Congress.

Expanding Environmental Enforcement: [S.1237](#) would close a loophole in the Environmental Conservation Law by allowing the state to prevent environmental malfeasance by seeking more aggressive enforcement and injunctive relief.

For example, state law governing Coastal Erosion Hazard Areas acknowledges the need to regulate development and construction in those areas to prevent erosion. But, because the law does not state a specific penalty for violations, the DEC Commissioner can only levy a fine where, in some circumstances, revoking permits or requiring the violator to change or demolish a structure may make more sense.

Senator Gianaris has been an environmental champion throughout his public service. With Senator Gianaris serving as Deputy Majority Leader, the Senate enacted the CLCPA, a historic law to combat the climate crisis. The CLCPA mandates aggressive reductions in statewide greenhouse gas emissions, improves resiliency efforts, ensures local job creation through energy transition, and promotes environmental justice by controlling the regressive impacts of climate change mitigation. He has been recognized for his efforts with perfect scores from [Environmental Advocates Action](#) and the [League of Conservation Voters](#).

Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell, who sponsors the S.1256-A's companion bill in the state Assembly, said "Lead risk mitigation strategies are among the most common sense and cost-effective public health interventions we can make. We must ensure that our kids have access to safe water in our parks by improving testing to find and abate lead in our water fountains. This is a necessary step to a lead-free New York, and I would like to thank the advocates and Senator Gianaris for their tireless work moving this urgent issue forward. I look forward to carrying this legislation over the finish line in the Assembly."

Rob Basch, President of the Hunters Point Parks Conservancy said, "Western Queens is on the frontlines of the fight against climate change, and we need to do our best to keep our neighborhoods safe. The Hunters Point Parks Conservancy thanks Senator Gianaris for standing up for our communities, our parks, and our children."

Meghan Cirrito, Immediate Past Board Chair, Gantry Parent Association said, "Children and families are using New York's green spaces now more than ever. It is imperative that we protect our children from lead - a toxic substance that can damage children's precious brains. We thank Senator Gianaris for keeping children and families safe in the parks throughout New York."

Anthony Liberatoscioli, of the Astoria Park Alliance said, “We take seriously the care of Astoria Park and our natural world. These bills are common sense measures that will protect our friends and neighbors. We thank Senator Gianaris for his partnership on keeping our natural world clean and healthy, and look forward to continued action from all state officials in Albany to rapidly address the many environmental needs of our community and our planet.”

Cortney Worrall, President and CEO, Waterfront Alliance said, "Waterfront Alliance applauds Senator Gianaris for his leadership on environmental protection and congratulates he and co-sponsors on the passage of S.1256-A and S.1237. With the passage of S.1256-A, drinking water fixtures in parks across New York State will have to be regularly tested for lead contamination and quickly abated, keeping our children safer from harmful metals while they are recreating in parks. And, the passage of S.1237 strengthens existing law regarding environmental permits, increasing the penalty for violations and creating the legal basis for stopping violations. These important protections will make our communities and ecosystems safer and healthier.”

Saad Amer, climate activist and Founder of Plus1Vote said, “It is clear that we need to invest more in infrastructure and push environmental regulation. No one should be drinking water contaminated with lead, and we need to close every loophole for bad actors taking advantage of weak environmental policy. I thank Senator Gianaris for pushing for environmental protections that have gone overlooked.”

Florence Koulouris, District Manager for Community Board 1 said, “Senator Gianaris has always stood up for our parks and our environment, and we are pleased the Senate is passing these bills this week. We look forward to continuing to work together for a stronger western Queens.”

Lisa Deller, Chair of Community Board 2 said, “During the covid-19 pandemic we have seen an increase in the utilization of the parks in our community. We greatly appreciate the efforts of Senator Gianaris to protect the environment and maintain our parks. We thank Senator Gianaris for pursuing this legislation.”

Willis Elkins, Executive Director of the Newtown Creek Alliance said, “We know how critical it is to take action against those who damage our environment. This legislation will not only hold bad actors accountable, but it will also enable the state to take action against those who see monetary damages as just the cost of doing business. This is a major step forward for chronically polluted areas like Newtown Creek and we are very thankful for Senator Gianaris' leadership on this issue.”

RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S1256A

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Relates to potable water testing at state and local parks

January 08, 2021

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Michael Gianaris**

Do you support this bill?

2021-S1237

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Relates to the general civil penalty of the environmental conservation law

January 08, 2021

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Michael Gianaris

Do you support this bill?