



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham Appointed as Chair of Senate Environmental Conservation Committee

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Albany, NY – New York State Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins has appointed State Senator Pete Harckham as chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee. The announcement of Stewart-Cousins’s committee chair appointments and committee assignments was made earlier today as the State Senate began its 2023-2024 session.

“I am very honored and grateful to Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins for appointing me as chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee and entrusting me with this major responsibility,” said Harckham. “With our focus on the state’s ambitious goals enacted in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, there will be much work to plan and complete statewide, which I look forward to, in partnership with my colleagues in the legislature and advocates across New York.”

Previously, Harckham served as chair of the Senate Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Committee since taking office in the State Senate four years ago. He succeeds Todd Kaminsky, a former state senator who retired at the end of 2022, as chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee.

Harckham noted that particular attention would need to be paid to protecting New York’s abundance of freshwater, which, in the years to come, will give the state a competitive economic edge over other states.

As for his other priorities as chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee, Harckham pointed to:

- Protecting the state’s fragile drinking water supplies at the source against pollution, especially PFAS, phosphorus and nitrogen;
- Reducing plastic waste, more efficient recycling and instituting greater producer responsibility;
- Putting in place more systematic evaluation processes for chemicals, pesticides and other toxins that are creating risks to human health; and
- Achieving careful oversight of the expenditures relating to the state’s recently enacted \$4.2 B Environmental Bond Act.

Harckham has long been a champion of environmental protections. At the Westchester Board of Legislators, where he served from 2008 to 2015, he coauthored important legislation regarding waste from hydrofracking and got the New York City's Department of Environmental Protection to test alternative septic technologies in the county's watersheds and release \$20 million to address water quality challenges.

In the State Senate, Harckham had three major environmental bills signed into law this year:

[S5116C](#), a wetlands bill that included in the State FY 2023 budget, preserves the state's Department of Environmental Conservation's authority over wetlands that are 12.4 acres and larger and expand the agency's authority over smaller wetlands of "unusual importance";

[S2758](#), which requires that 100% percent of in-state sales of new passenger cars and trucks are zero-emissions by 2035; and

[S6018B](#) extends the excess edible food law passed in 2021 and helps ensure continued food donations to local and community-based food relief organizations while also reducing the amount of food waste diverted to solid waste landfills.

Additionally, Harckham had three of his in-land waterways bills signed into law this year, which will help municipalities improve water quality, preserve open space and protect wildlife habitat while promoting economic development and tourism.

Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins appointed Harckham to six other Senate committees today as well: Alcoholism & Substance Abuse; Codes; Insurance; Local Government; Transportation; and Veterans, Homeland Security & Military Affairs.