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Eye on the Environment

A special report from State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.



NYS STATE SENATOR
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Dear Friends:

The need to ensure a clean and healthy environment both today and in the future cannot be overstated. We all need clean air to breathe, pure water to drink, the ability to enjoy the abundant natural resources New York State has to offer, and new sources of energy that will reduce our reliance on foreign oil without devastating our environment.

As your State Senator, I am dedicated to protecting our environment from harm while working to see how we can better preserve our natural resources and create new jobs in an increasingly “green” economy. Solar power, wind power, research into alternative energy sources, new recycling efforts, improvements in energy-efficient construction and transportation – all of these and other advancements can play a part in offering new employment for New Yorkers while providing us all with clean energy and a healthier future.

In this report, I wanted to let you know about some of the environmental issues being worked on in the State Senate and right here in Queens. As always, if you have any questions, or if I may ever be of any assistance to you in the community, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.

P.S. Don't forget to check out the news about my upcoming Sixth Community Recycling Day on September 30th in Woodhaven!

FIGHTING BACK AGAINST HYDROFRACKING

Ethan-diol potassium hydroxide. Ammonia persulfate magnesium nitrate. Cristabolite polyethoxylated alkanol. Formaldehyde sodium hydroxide.

So, do any of these chemicals sound like something we want in our drinking water or soil in New York State? I don't think so, and that's one of the reasons why I am opposed to allowing hydraulic fracturing, or “hydrofracking,” to go forward in our state – especially since we're still attempting to obtain the facts about this controversial process.

This complex drilling practice, which involves pumping water and a mixture of questionable chemicals into the ground in order to extract natural gas from shale, leaves a lot of important questions unanswered. While some contend that hydrofracking could benefit the state's economy, I, and others, remain concerned about its long-term impact on the public health, our environment as a whole, and our drinking water – both here in New York City and throughout the state. We need a lot more information about the pros and cons of this process, and its impact in other states, before we take any possibly irreversible risks with our environment and health. Simply put: *we can't frack without the facts.*

Right now, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is reviewing thousands of pages of testimony from New Yorkers – including some I provided – in order to produce a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement and propose regulations to govern hydrofracking, should it ever be allowed in New York. I am closely monitoring this review process, and pushing several pieces of legislation to address the issue. *continued on page 4...*



Senator Addabbo joined actor and anti-hydrofracking activist Mark Ruffalo at a State Capitol Rally protesting the controversial drilling process.

2012-2013 STATE BUDGET: GOING FOR THE “GREEN” IN NEW YORK

I was proud to support some important measures in the 2012-2013 State Budget to protect and improve our environment:

- The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) was funded at \$134 million, escaping cuts at a difficult economic time. This fund supports many vital environmental projects throughout the state aimed at protecting air and water quality, preserving open space, managing solid waste, and supporting zoos, parks and environmental education programs.
- The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) capital plan was fully funded, helping New Yorkers to take advantage of mass transit, save gasoline costs, and improve our overall air quality. Also, the plan calls for the use of more new energy efficient “green buses” in the MTA region.
- The New York Works program, as part of its primary goal of creating good jobs, will ultimately provide \$143 million to rehabilitate state parks after an initial \$89 million investment.
- The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will receive \$16.2 million to continue building the “Energy Superhighway” through research and development activities and creation of a 2013 state energy plan. The plan will help guide New York’s efforts to conserve energy, develop new sources of sustainable power, and otherwise address our state’s ongoing and future energy needs.

LEGISLATIVE NOTEBOOK: EYE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

I thought you might want to learn about several bills I have been supporting to address a number of environmental issues:

S.6456: Creates a New York State Climate Change Task Force within the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to address the ramifications of global warming on the state’s tourism economy, coastal communities, agriculture, overall environment and infrastructure, and develop a plan to reduce the severity of climate change impact on the state and its residents.

S.2742: Requires the New York State DEC to develop comprehensive rules and regulations to limit greenhouse gas emissions and help to minimize climate changes associated with global warming in the state.

S.5403A: Would provide new support to New York’s Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) by dedicating a portion of unclaimed returnable bottle deposits to the fund. Although the EPF escaped cuts in this year’s budget, the amount of state support provided to the fund has dwindled over the years. Unclaimed bottle deposits, combined with real estate transfer tax revenues already dedicated to the EPF, would help to boost environmental protection programs throughout the state. A similar bill (S7525) was passed by the Legislature and will now be reviewed by the Governor.

S.6268: Establishes the “Sewage Pollution Right to Know Act” to ensure that New Yorkers are promptly notified when sewage – which contains many contaminants, pollutants, bacteria and toxins dangerous to the environment and public health – is discharged into their community. Quick notification would limit exposure for shellfish harvesting activities, swimming and diving, and other water recreational activities. This bill has now been approved by the Senate and Assembly, and will be sent to the Governor for consideration.



LET THE SUNSHINE IN!

Earlier this year, Governor Andrew Cuomo launched an innovative New York Sun initiative in an effort to increase the use of solar power in the state. This two year program is a great start towards creating new jobs in the solar industry and producing clean renewable energy, and I believe it should be expanded.

I am committed to the potential of solar power, which is being actively pursued by neighboring New Jersey, and am a co-sponsor of the New York Solar Industry Development and Jobs Act (S.4178.) This legislation would provide incentives for the installation of solar projects in New York, creating thousands of good jobs and putting the power of sunshine to work for all of us. I also voted to approve legislation (S.3203) to provide sales tax breaks for the installation of commercial solar energy systems and a bill (S.149) to provide tax credits for individuals who lease and install solar equipment. The latter measure will soon be sent to the Governor for final approval. Both measures will soon be sent to the Governor for final approval.



REUSE, RECYCLE AND REMEMBER...

COME OUT FOR MY 6TH FREE COMMUNITY RECYCLING EVENT

Over the last few years, I've held a number of very successful recycling events here in the district that have taken a total of more than 95,000 pounds of old electronics, televisions, clothing, bedding, paper, carpet and other recyclable items out of the waste stream. All of you who have participated in these efforts – the most recent was in April of this year – are to be congratulated for doing your part to help protect our environment. I believe it's good to both clean out your house and know that you're disposing of unwanted "stuff" in an environmentally responsible manner.

In this light, I wanted to let you know I am scheduling my **Sixth Community Recycling Day for Sunday, September 30th, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Forest Park Bandshell Parking Lot in Woodhaven.** The parking lot is on Forest Park Drive, one block west of Woodhaven Boulevard, and I hope to see you there! The event is completely free of charge, and constituents will have the opportunity to safely dispose of electronics, clothing, old eyeglasses, and other items. Paper shredding will also be available.

If you want to be informed of the details of my upcoming Sixth Community Recycling Day, or have other questions about community events, please feel free to contact Pete DeLucia in my district office at 718-738-1111. [Come go green with us!](#)



Senator Addabbo and Assemblymember Mike Miller help out at a recent Community Recycling Day event that they co-sponsored.



Senator Addabbo joins with some volunteers and participants who came out to spread the word and take part in community recycling.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION BEGINS AT HOME

While we all need to be concerned about climate change and other "big picture" environmental challenges, it's also important to take action to address smaller problems plaguing our communities. A few things I've been working on:

- I've introduced legislation (S.7086/A.9871) along with Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder to prohibit potentially toxic sludge or sediments resulting from dredging in New York Harbor from being deposited in any of the Jamaica Bay borrow pits. Any effort to dump hazardous materials into the Bay is a threat to local families, our valuable eco-system, and the area's economy. Right now, federal law prohibits dredging materials from being dumped into open ocean areas, but a loophole doesn't provide the same protections for Jamaica Bay.
- Together with other Queens elected officials, I met earlier this year with State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Joseph Martens to discuss the ongoing noise and air pollution problems plaguing Middle Village residents living near the CSX freight rail lines. I intend to continue working with the DEC to do additional air quality testing in the area, and since the rail lines fall under federal jurisdiction, I have been reaching out to our Washington representatives for assistance in addressing this issue.
- Finally, I'm happy to note that the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has installed a device at the Shellbank Basin in Howard Beach to end the summertime stench caused by dying fish that wind up in the Basin after chasing smaller prey into it from Jamaica Bay. Similar to a huge aquarium bubbler, the device (pictured above) pumps air into the Basin and keeps the fish from suffocating and dying. It was a pleasure to work with Community Board 10 and other concerned residents and businesses on resolving this issue.

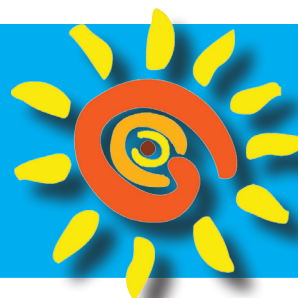


The bills I am advocating take different approaches, seeking to:

- *Prohibit hydrofracking altogether (S.4220);*
- *Place a moratorium on the issuance of any hydraulic fracturing permits (S.5592);*
- *Test any hydrofracking waste for radioactivity (S.4251);*
- *Conduct a comprehensive health assessment of hydrofracking (S.6772);*
- *Require a seismic impact assessment related to the practice (S.6903);*
- *Require that hydrofracking byproducts be regulated as hazardous waste (S.4616);*
- *Prohibit hydrofracking contracts that refuse to disclose chemicals used (S.3765); and*
- *Establish strict, comprehensive gas drilling regulations to make the protection of our natural resources and public health the absolute top priority if hydrofracking is permitted (S.2697).*

While we certainly need to do more as a state and a country to reduce our reliance on foreign oil, I don't think rushing into hydraulic fracturing in New York, regardless of our abundance of natural gas reserves, is the way to go. Under any circumstances, we must explore other alternative energy sources – including solar and wind power – that have the capacity to create jobs and keep our homes and businesses running without poisoning our drinking water.

SUMMER ENERGY SAVING TIPS...



- *Dirty air conditioner filters waste energy and can damage the unit, so it's a good idea to check yours every month and replace as needed.*
- *Block out summer heat by closing your blinds or curtains during the day.*
- *To keep your house cooler, consider using ovens, washing machines, dryers and dishwashers in the early morning or late at night when it's not as hot outside.*
- *Think about turning off ceiling fans when you leave the room. Fans cool off people, not the rooms themselves, by creating a wind chill effect.*
- *Try not to put lamps or television sets near your air conditioner thermostat. The heat will make your air conditioner think that your room is warmer than it is, and it will work harder.*
- *Attempt to wash only full loads of dishes and laundry, and consider air-drying your clothes.*

I'M HERE TO HELP!

If I may ever be of any assistance to you in the community, please do not hesitate to contact me:

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