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RACHEL MAY
SENATOR, 48TH DISTRICT

Chair
Cities 2
Legislative Commission on
Rural Resources
Committees
Aging
Agriculture
Elections
Environmental Conservation
Health
Housing, Construction and
Community Development

Albany Office
Legislative Office Building
Room 803
Albany, New York 12247
(518) 455-2838

District Office
State Office Building
Room 805
333 East Washington St.
Syracuse, New York 13202
(315) 478-8745
may@nysenate.gov

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Media Contact: Dan Messineo

messineo@nysenate.gov

(970) 646-2864

Advocates Rally for Senator Rachel May's Bill to Prepare New York for Extreme Rain Events

Rain Ready Legislation Strengthens Communities Against Severe Flooding

ALBANY, NY – As the severe weather season begins, advocates rally at the Capitol to ensure New York is Rain Ready for extreme weather. Senator May sponsors the Rain Ready bill ([S4071A](#)), which would give certain water and sewer authorities the ability to reduce flooding through improved stormwater management. Assemblymember Nily Rozic sponsors the bill in the Assembly.

“The storms we’re seeing today are stronger, more frequent, and more dangerous, and New York communities need to be ready,” **said Senator Rachel May**. “The Rain Ready bill gives water and sewer authorities the ability to take action to reduce flooding and save lives. It helps municipalities address stormwater runoff, giving communities the ability to respond to extreme weather before it becomes a disaster.”

“I am proud to sponsor the Rain Ready New York Act as New York faces more frequent extreme weather and flooding. This legislation ensures our local authorities have the tools to address stormwater challenges and make smart investments that protect our neighborhoods now and in the future,” **said Assemblywoman Nily Rozic**.

The Rain Ready bill gives New York’s water and sewer authorities the ability to use existing funds for infrastructure upgrades and take action on the growing number of hard, non-porous surfaces in our communities. Those surfaces make runoff worse, especially as we are seeing more intense rainfall. Giving municipalities the authority to manage this is the first step in tackling excess stormwater. As storms become more severe and dangerous each year, making our communities rain ready is a critical priority that will help save lives and property.

Effective stormwater management provides several critical benefits. First and foremost it mitigates flooding risks which in turn protects lives and structures. Severe storms and heavy stormwater runoff can

lead to tragic injuries and deaths when people become trapped in flooded roadways and basement apartments, particularly in urban areas like New York City. Managing stormwater also protects water quality and aquatic life by helping filter and divert harmful pollutants, road salt, pesticides, and litter away from waterways.

Jeremy Cherson, associate director of government affairs for Riverkeeper: “Climate change is causing more frequent and intense rain events that will only get worse. Extreme flooding overwhelms streets, subways and sewer systems, releasing raw sewage into our waterways. Umbrellas and rain gear are not enough. These bills facilitate coordinated climate planning efforts and enable utilities to protect communities and reduce stormwater runoff. New York must get rain ready and pass this legislation today.”

David Ansel, vice president Center for Water Protection at Save the Sound: Stormwater runoff is a major pollution source and flooding problem in the Long Island Sound region and across New York State. Severe weather is becoming more frequent as a result of climate change. When it rains, our wastewater infrastructure is often overwhelmed, resulting in massive amounts of partially and untreated sewage entering our waterways. In addition, as stormwater runoff moves across impervious surfaces, like roads and parking lots, any contaminants on the ground—such as fertilizer, pesticides, pet waste, motor oil, rubber tire debris, and plastic trash—will be washed into our lakes, rivers, streams and Long Island Sound. When the Rain Ready New York Act becomes law, it will give communities another tool to improve the management of stormwater and encourage the use of green infrastructure to naturally absorb and filter runoff before it can pollute our waterways or flood our neighborhoods.

“Flooding continues to be the most frequent climate disaster in New York, and communities are looking to the state legislature and Governor for real solutions to protect people and infrastructure. In the absence of federal climate leadership, New York must get Rain Ready on its own. Waterfront Alliance is urging the state leadership to step up and swiftly pass the Rain Ready NY Act. From Brooklyn to Buffalo, the Rain Ready NY Act will allow the most flood vulnerable communities across New York to get ahead of the next major flood,” **said Tyler Taba, Director of Policy and Government Affairs at Waterfront Alliance.**

Michelle Luebke, program manager of the SWIM (Stormwater Infrastructure Matters) Coalition: "One of the most important parts of the Rain Ready NY Act is that it finally recognizes stormwater as the pollutant it is. Under current conditions, polluted stormwater not only causes flooding, it is carrying toxins that are harmful to people and the environment and often mixed with raw sewage in combined sewer systems. As longtime advocates of natural, nature-based solutions to manage stormwater, this bill could lead to greater adoption of green infrastructure across New York City and State, resulting in reduced flooding, fewer sewage overflows, and other co-benefits like mitigating air quality and temperature."

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