



NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

For Immediate Release: April 26, 2021

Contact: Jonathan Heppner | heppner@nysenate.gov | 518-455-2415

Senate Majority to Pass Groundbreaking Environmental Legislation

(Albany, NY) Today, the Senate Democratic Majority will pass legislation in honor of Earth Day to continue protecting the state's environment. Today's legislation builds on successes in the SFY 2021-2022 budget to put New York State at the forefront of protecting and preserving New York's natural resources. This legislation furthers renewable energy initiatives to meet goals set in the [Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act](#). The bills being advanced will reduce plastic pollution, increase enforcement of the state's environmental laws, protect state forests, decrease greenhouse emissions, increase the use of state-operated electric vehicles, bolster the state's solar production, expand electric vehicle recharging, provide protections for Native nations and tribes, and combat biodiversity and climate crises on state land.

"Climate change is real and must be addressed to protect future generations," **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. "This package continues the Senate Majority's ongoing commitment to New York State being a national and world leader in the fight against climate change. These bills will help protect our natural resources, reduce our environmental footprint, and promote renewable energy. I commend the bill sponsors for championing a cleaner and greener New York."

Bill Sponsor and Chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, Senator Todd Kaminsky, said, "Protecting our environment must be a top priority — and under the leadership of Senator Stewart-Cousins, it is. By passing this slate of bills, New York is continuing to lead on mitigating plastic waste, fighting climate change, prohibiting harmful chemicals and transitioning to a greener, more sustainable future for our children."

Bill Sponsor and Chair of the Senate Committee Energy and Telecommunications, Senator Kevin Parker, said, "The Senate Majority is taking the necessary steps to preserve our state's limited resources, and we will continue to advocate for environmental justice and a greener New York. I am proud to sponsor legislation that promotes clean renewable energy, and I am certain this legislative package will make a positive impact on our climate."

The legislation being passed by the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

- **Reducing Plastic Pollution At Hotels:** This bill, [S.543](#), sponsored by Senator Todd Kaminsky, reduces plastic pollution by converting hotels from using individual small bottles to refillable bulk dispensers for hospitality personal care products.
- **Expands Environmental Enforcement:** This bill, [S.1237](#), sponsored by Senator Michael Gianaris, amends the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) to provide injunctive relief for ECL violations for which there is no specifically stated penalty in law.

- **Prohibits Leasing of Certain State-Owned Lands For Gas Production:** This bill, [S.1421](#), sponsored by Senator Jose M. Serrano, prohibits the lease of state forests, wildlife management areas and unique areas for the purpose of gas production.
- **Decreases Greenhouse Gas Emissions from the Transportation Sector:** This bill, [S.2758](#), sponsored by Senator Pete Harckham, sets a goal of 100 percent of in-state sales of new passenger cars and trucks being zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) by 2035, and for 100 percent of medium-duty and heavy-duty vehicle sales to be ZEVs by 2045.
- **State Purchase of Zero Emission Vehicles:** This bill, [S.2838A](#), sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker, requires preparation of a state fleet procurement plan to ensure that zero emission vehicles will be purchased for state agencies.
- **Expands the Market for the State’s Solar Production:** This bill, [S.3521A](#), sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker, directs the Public Service Commission to create a system to allow solar energy credits to be transferred between utility territories, making it easier for consumers to access renewable energy.
- **Electric Vehicle Recharging:** This bill, [S.3929](#), sponsored by Senator Tim Kennedy, requires utilities to file an electric vehicle charging tariff with the Public Service Commission that allows a customer to purchase electricity for the purpose of recharging an electric vehicle.
- **Protects Native American Hunting and Fishing Rights:** This bill, [S.5266](#), sponsored by Senator Rachel May, protects Native Americans from being ticketed for violating fish and game laws when they are exercising hunting and fishing rights protected by treaty.
- **Makes “30 by 30” Part of the State’s Land Acquisition Policy:** This bill, [S.6191](#), sponsored by Senator Todd Kaminsky, combats the biodiversity and climate crises by setting a goal to conserve at least 30 percent of New York's land by 2030.
- **Pollinator Friendly Roadways:** This bill, [S.660](#), sponsored by Senator Rachel May, encourages the redevelopment and rehabilitation of medians along state highways and other roadways into pollinator friendly zones through new planting practices, mowing routines, and expansion of adopt-a-highway programs.

Bill Sponsor, Deputy Majority Leader Senator Michael Gianaris, said, "The clock is ticking on our planet’s health and we must take aggressive action today if we are to solve the climate crisis. 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."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Pete Harckham, said, “Requiring vehicles to be entirely free of carbon and other toxic emissions is the best way to ramp up our fight against climate change. We need to take decisive action right now, and I am heartened that a number of other states have realized this as well. Together, we can make a difference, but it is going to take an all-out initiative to save our planet, and this is how New York and other states can impact the environment.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Tim Kennedy, said, “It's imperative that we're prioritizing sustainable reforms that will continue to underscore our commitment to high quality transportation and a greener, environmentally-just New York. Through the creation of this commercial tariff, we're encouraging the growth of electric vehicle technology, incentivizing the expansion of charging stations, and making it easier for consumers to access these energy sources across New York State.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Rachel May, said, “For many centuries, indigenous nations in the region now known as New York State have cultivated a relationship of gratitude and respect for its land, water, and plant and animal life. I am pleased that the Senate is advancing my bill to recognize their hunting and fishing rights, as protected by treaty. We are also honoring the principles of respectful land stewardship by beefing up land conservation and environmental protection in general, supporting pollinator-friendly habitats, reducing waste, and curbing carbon pollution. Happy Earth Day!”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Jose M. Serrano, said, “As we face the realities of climate change and the threat fossil fuels pose to our communities, I am proud to sponsor legislation that will prohibit any new leases for oil drilling on state protected forest lands. This bill will ensure more than 1 million acres of sensitive forests and wildlife management areas are protected from drilling activity. Today's actions will further the goals of the CLCPA and get us one step closer to meeting our renewable energy transition timelines.”

Senator Jamaal Bailey said, “From the air that we breathe to the water that we drink to the land that we grow upon, strong environmental protection is critical. Enacting legislation that protects our planet today and that is also forward-looking is a hallmark and priority of this conference. I am proud to be a part of a conference that understands the importance of protecting our planet and ensuring that all of our children can enjoy the beauty of the planet for years to come, so that we may find ways to enjoy and revitalize the great natural resources of this state. I'd like to thank Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins and Environmental Conservation Chair Todd Kaminsky for their steadfast leadership in protecting our environment by presenting a legislative agenda dedicated to our environment.”

Senator Alessandra Biaggi said, “There has never been a more urgent time for New York State to deliver bold solutions to protect our environment and combat climate change. We have an opportunity to lead and enact legislation that will drastically reduce plastic pollution and green-house gas emissions, and protect our communities most impacted by the climate crisis. Now is our chance to transform our state and safeguard our environment. I am proud to join my colleagues in passing this much needed Earth Day legislative package.”

Senator Jabari Brisport said, “Our loved ones are already dying from the effects of profit-seeking environmental destruction. From here on out, every day must be Earth Day — this fight is life or death.”

Senator Samra Brouk said, “I am proud to join my colleagues in the Senate to pass this slate of bills in honor of Earth Day. These essential protections will ensure that future generations will inherit a healthy, whole planet. Climate change disproportionately impacts our communities' most vulnerable residents, including communities of color, immigrant and refugee communities, American Indian tribes, and low-income neighborhoods. Reversing the damage done by global warming and pollution will take collaboration across all sectors, and these bills are an important step in the right direction for New York State and for our environment.”

Senator Jim Gaughran said, “Climate change is the most severe threat facing our planet and it is imperative that we continue taking bold, aggressive actions to stop the devastating impacts we're witnessing. Today's legislation builds on the landmark climate change law our Democratic Legislature passed last year, and we will continue to enact policies to protect our environment for generations to come.”

Senator Andrew Gounardes said, “The legislation in this package is a vital step in our collective efforts to fight the effects of climate change. By taking measures like reducing plastic pollution, investing in electric vehicle infrastructure, and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, we will build on the climate leadership that we've established to tackle this immense challenge and take meaningful action to protect our environment. We all must do our part to preserve the health of our planet and future generations, and that's why I introduced legislation to establish a model environmental curriculum in all public elementary and secondary schools. This effort, combined with the crucial measures this legislative package takes, will put us on a path to effectively combat climate change and reduce pollution in New York.”

Senator Michelle Hinchey said, “We only have one Earth, and we need to do everything in our power to protect it. New York continues to lead the nation in its commitment to achieving landmark clean energy goals and environmental conservation efforts that will power our economic recovery with more green jobs and a healthier planet. The legislation we're passing today in honor of Earth Day propels these efforts even further, reducing unnecessary plastics pollution, accelerating our shift to clean vehicles, and strengthening protections for our precious lands, wildlife, and water systems. I will always fight for environmental actions that put our communities on a more sustainable path now and for future generations.”

Senator Brad Hoylman said, “Protecting natural resources for future generations is one of the most sacred duties that we, as public servants, are entrusted with. I am proud to be a part of a legislative majority that has prioritized environmental protection, and the Earth Day package we are voting on today will continue that work. I’m grateful to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Environmental Committee Chair Todd Kaminsky for their leadership in advancing progressive environmental legislation that will help ensure we protect our planet for the generations to come.”

Senator Anna M. Kaplan said, “The experts all agree that our climate is at a tipping point, and if we don’t take action to reverse course, we will soon be past the point of no return. It’s critical that New York continues to lead the way by enacting common-sense legislation that conserves our critical resources and helps us turn the corner of the climate crisis, and the package of legislation passed by the Senate Majority today will do just that. I’m proud to support this effort to protect our environment, and I thank Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for advancing these bills today.”

Senator Liz Krueger said, “New Yorkers can be proud of our record of environmental stewardship and climate action. But the reality is that there's no time to simply rest on our laurels. With the passage of these bills today we are taking several more important steps toward building a more sustainable society and protecting our children and grandchildren from the ravages of climate change.”

Senator John Liu said, “These Earth Day bills build on the historic climate reforms we enacted in 2019 and better position our state to meet the goals mandated by those reforms. The bills also complement the infrastructure and electric vehicle initiatives recently advanced by Amtrak Joe, who as President can very credibly move this nation towards these important environmental and climate protection goals.”

Senator Shelley Mayer said, “I am so pleased to support this package of legislation to help meet New York's ambitious environmental goals to mitigate climate change and restore the environment. Among other achievements, this package will reduce plastic waste, enhance our commitment to electric vehicles, recognize the importance of restoring our natural environment, and expand penalties for violations of environmental conservation law. I am proud of what my colleagues and I have done and continue to do to address our climate crisis.”

Senator Roxanne J. Persaud said, “Today’s package of legislation demonstrates our strong commitment to a cleaner and greener New York. Earth Day gives pause to examine the impacts we have on our communities, ecosystems and the planet. We are all responsible for being good stewards.”

Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick said, “This package of bills reinforces our state's leadership on climate and environmental protection. It reflects the increasing public awareness of how choices made at the individual and community level will have an impact on our shared habitat for years to come. My younger constituents in particular identify environmental protection as one of their top issues, and I voted in favor of these bills to ensure the health and wellbeing of them and future generations. We have an obligation as stewards of the Earth to protect our environment, and I am proud to say that New York is at the vanguard of environmental conservation in America.”

Senator Sean Ryan said, “The actions we take in the short term have a major impact on our state’s ability to reduce our long-term ecological footprint and remain a leader in the nation’s effort to create a more sustainable future. Among other positive steps, this package of legislation helps promote the proliferation of zero-emission vehicles, which will substantially reduce air pollution and serve as an important element of our nation’s efforts to combat climate change in the decades to come.”

Senator Luis R. Sepúlveda said, “I am pleased to stand with my colleagues in support of legislation that would ban the use of small plastic bottles in hotels, prohibit state forests from being used for gas production, and

provide that sales of new passenger cars be zero-emissions by 2035, among many other important pieces of legislation. I am happy to honor this year's Earth Day celebration with these critical measures and commit to continuing the fight towards a more sustainable and green future.”

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said, “This legislation takes proactive steps to protect our environment. The package includes a bill, which I proudly co-sponsor, that will help disadvantaged communities gain easier access to low-cost, renewable solar energy. This will help thousands of New York City residents lower their energy bills while doing a service to the environment.”

Senator Kevin Thomas said, “We have to act now to save the planet for future generations. I am proud to join my Senate colleagues in support of legislation that protects our precious natural resources, reduces pollution, and enhances the affordability and accessibility of renewable energy. The Senate Majority remains committed to fighting for a cleaner, greener New York.”

Julie Tighe, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters, said, “As the White House is working to pass its American Jobs Plan, New York continues to lead on climate action and environmental progress. This Earth Month package of legislation will encourage a transition to clean transportation, reduce waste, increase renewable energy, and protect our public lands. Adopting these bills will result in less pollution, better air and water quality, and fewer environmental contaminants. We thank Majority Leader Stewart Cousins and Senators Kaminsky and Parker for the Senate’s leadership in prioritizing the environment.”

Anne Reynolds, Executive Director of the Alliance for Clean Energy New York, said, “It is fantastic that the NYS Senate is recognizing Earth Day by direct action on these bills, particularly measures that will bring more electric cars to New York and reform electric rates to encourage fast charging stations. Electric cars and buses will bring cleaner air to our busiest neighborhoods and highways. It is a change New Yorkers are ready to make.”

Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE), said, “The Senate’s Earth Day and Water Week package is a bold slate of bills that continue to demonstrate New York State’s national leadership on protecting our environment and fighting climate change. When enacted into law, these policies will protect drinking water, preserve biodiversity, reduce plastic pollution, bolster the use of electric vehicles, and so much more. We commend Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Senator Todd Kaminsky, and the Senate for passing these critical bills.”

Ramsay Adams, Executive Director, Catskill Mountainkeeper, said, “The bills that the New York State Senate is passing in honor of Earth Day and National Water Week create a legacy of care for New Yorkers and our natural environment,” said "From increasing pollinator habitat to codifying Native Nations' fishing rights and expanding New York's renewable energy opportunities, these bills lead the way. Catskill Mountainkeeper is excited to see them become law, and urges the Assembly to pass and the Governor to sign these bills.”

Liz Moran, Environmental Policy Director for NYPIRG, said, “The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of policies that protect the environment and public health, making this year's Earth Day and passage of this legislative package all the more crucial. NYPIRG applauds the Senate for passing this suite of legislation, which will reduce plastic waste and climate pollution, and ensure all New Yorkers, regardless of where they live, have the right to know what's in their water.”

Kim Elliman, president and CEO of the Open Space Institute, said, “The Open Space Institute commends the New York State Senate for advancing a legislative package to promote Earth Day and National Water Week. We are particularly enthusiastic about Senator Kaminsky’s legislation that will accelerate conservation in New York State and leverage land protection as a natural climate solution for the greatest environmental crisis of our lifetime. Enactment of this legislation will, for generations to come, improve New Yorker’s access to clean water and recreation, while also providing wildlife habitat and fighting climate change.”

Kate Kurera, Deputy Director for Environmental Advocates NY, said, “Today, the Senate continues to show its vision for a green, sustainable, and equitable future in passing a suite of bills that will benefit New York’s environment. Nowhere is this better seen than in legislation that will make its way to the Governor’s desk, which sets out a roadmap for all new car sales in New York will be fully electric by 2035. We thank Senate leadership for their continued commitment to protecting the environment and public health.”

Betta Broad, the Campaign Director of New Yorkers for Clean Power, said, “It’s great to celebrate Earth Month with this package of bills designed to create a cleaner, greener New York. We appreciate the leadership of Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and the Senators who are moving our state faster to electrifying transportation. We’re also excited that those mini shampoo bottles at hotels will be a thing of the past— a great step to eliminating unnecessary plastic waste!”

Roger Downs, Conservation Director for the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter, said, “As New York strives to implement the nation leading Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, there is still so much work to be done to protect our communities and remaining wild places from chemical contamination, habitat destruction, and water pollution. Building upon the strong environmental budget passed by the Legislature and Governor, we commend the NYS Senate for continuing that momentum by passing an impressive package of environmental bills that safeguard our communities from toxic exposures, protect drinking water quality, curb transportation emissions, expand the growth of renewable energy, strengthen New York’s wilderness legacy and uplift our most disadvantaged communities from the inequities of climate change. Like any legislative action, the full effect of these measures relies upon agreement with the Assembly and Governor. The Sierra Club looks forward to working with all parties on all these important issues to find common ground and enact the most effective laws possible.

Jeremy Cherson, Legislative Advocacy Manager for Riverkeeper, said, “Riverkeeper applauds the Senate for passing a slate of important bills on the heels of Earth Day, such as banning the application of coal-tar based pavement sealers, reducing plastic pollution by banning hotel toiletry bottles and requiring DOH to create an emerging contaminants testing list. These bills, if passed by the Assembly and signed by the Governor, will continue the long march to a cleaner Hudson River and a healthier New York.”

Kathy Harris, Clean Vehicles and Fuels Advocate at NRDC, said, (Natural Resources Defense Council), said, “Reducing harmful tailpipe pollution that endangers our communities and environment will help improve the health and well-being of New Yorkers. This bill is a step in the right direction toward a zero-emission transportation sector, which is vital to achieving the state’s ambitious climate goals and building a fossil fuel free future. We support the sponsors efforts to advance equitable and ambitious transportation policies.”

Erin McGrath, Policy Manager for Audubon New York, said, “Birds are telling us that we need to act now to restore our earth, and we commend the Senate for passing legislation that will protect the places people and wildlife need to survive in honor of Earth Day. Audubon strongly supports efforts to conserve 30% of our State’s lands by 2030, reduce the proliferation of microplastics in our environment, and minimize the impacts of climate change. These actions will ensure a brighter and greener future for birds and all New Yorkers, and we look forward to seeing them enacted into law.”

Shyam Mehta, Executive Director of New York Solar Energy Industries, said, “By passing this collection of Earth Day 2021 legislation, the New York Senate has reaffirmed its commitment to bold leadership on clean energy and environmental protection for New York. NYSEIA member companies are grateful to Senator Kevin Parker for his progressive vision on the Community Solar for Disadvantaged Communities Act (S.3521-A), which will enable more electricity customers to save on their energy bills by subscribing to solar farms throughout the state. Sen. Parker’s bill enhances environmental justice—especially for New York City residents—and gives low-and-moderate income communities access to solar energy even when they do not own their own rooftops. This innovation, combined with Senate bills on electrifying our vehicle fleet, point the way toward a healthier and more equitable electricity grid for all New Yorkers.”

###