



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 11, 2015

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Legislators Make Bipartisan End-Of-Session Push To Pass Environmental Laws

ALBANY – Today, members of the New York State Caucus of Environmental Legislators (NYSCEL) called for passage of several key bills before the end of the regular legislative session, which is scheduled to adjourn next week.

Each of the bills, backed by members of NYSCEL – a nonpartisan bicameral caucus chaired by Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh, – has both Republican and Democratic sponsors, and most have advanced in one or both houses.

Child Safe Products Act (Englebright/Boyle, A05612/S4102 – Passed Assembly, in Senate Environmental Conservation Committee)

- The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) would publish a list of chemicals found in items meant for children that pose a risk to human health. Manufacturers of children's products would be required to notify retailers when the merchandise they are selling contains one of the listed chemicals. Sale of children's products that contain the most harmful chemicals would be banned.

Microbead-Free Waters Act (Schimel/O'Mara, A05896/S3932 – Passed Assembly, in Senate Environmental Conservation Committee)

- This bill would ban the sale or distribution of personal cosmetic products containing microbeads, which are micro-sized pieces of plastic found in some facial and body wash products that slip through municipal water treatment plants and into bodies of water throughout the state. The beads enter the food chain where they can be mistaken for food by fish and they are capable of absorbing toxins that pose a serious threat to human health and wildlife.

Hazardous Waste Loophole Bill (Englebright/Avella A06859/S0884 – On Assembly floor, in Senate Environmental Conservation Committee)

- More than 500,000 tons and 23,000 barrels of fracking waste have been transported from Pennsylvania to New York landfills. This waste is often hazardous because it can be toxic and flammable and contain chemicals, metals, benzene, and other dangerous substances. Yet our state's environmental regulations inexplicably exempt waste from oil and gas drilling from being treated as hazardous waste regardless of the actual hazard it poses. The bill would require a comprehensive analysis of waste to determine whether its chemical content and characteristics make it hazardous. Such waste would be properly tracked and disposed of only at facilities equipped to safely handle it.

Paint Stewardship (Peoples-Stokes A03304 or Stirpe/O'Mara, A06199/S4926 – In Assembly Ways and Means and Environmental Conservation Committees respectively, on Senate floor):

- About 10% of paint purchased in New York goes unused. This results in about 3.1 million gallons of leftover paint each year in New York State. These bills would create a take-back program for leftover paint similar to those established for electronic waste, rechargeable batteries, and thermostats.

Financial Liability for Crude Oil Storage (Fahy/Avella, A07625/S05751A – In Assembly Codes Committee, in Senate Environmental Conservation Committee):

- The storage of crude oil has increased dramatically nationwide over the past five years. This is a result of rail transport's increase from over 9,000 carloads of crude oil in 2008 to over 400,000 in 2013, expanding the need for safe and secure storage facilities. This bill would require companies have financial security to meet all responsibilities for cleanup and decontamination costs associated with the release of such oil.

Community Solar Program (Paulin/Griffo, A07964/S5841 – In Assembly Energy Committee, in Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee):

- Many New Yorkers are interested in improving the environment and protecting electric system reliability through the use of solar energy, but up-front costs and space limitations prevent many from owning or leasing their own solar energy systems. This bill would create a pilot program allowing electric corporations to offer subscriptions for solar power.

Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh said, "There's enough time left in the session to pass these widely supported, critical environmental reforms. It should not be controversial to protect children from toxic toys, to stop contaminating our waterways with plastic beads, to handle toxic waste safely, to promote clean renewable energy, or to accomplish the other objectives we're discussing today. I am proud to stand with fellow members of NYSCEL today, calling for enacting these laws before we adjourn the legislative session."

Senator Phil Boyle said, "As we consider a variety of issues in the closing days of session, we must not lose sight of the opportunity to take substantial steps to protect New Yorkers from toxic toys and other environmental dangers, and to keep our waterways, our air, and our communities clean and healthy."

Senator José M. Serrano said, "Protecting our environment for future generations is not a partisan issue. My colleagues from both sides of the aisle, and from both houses are committed to working together to create and pass legislation that protects and enhances our environment while protecting public health. We are united in the common goal of pushing key environmental bills that will make this planet a better place for our families, our neighbors and for future generations to come."

Senator George Latimer said "Every one of these bills should be a priority for the Legislature to pass and implement, and the sooner the better. Environmentalism is about protecting our planet and ourselves now and in the future. We must get serious and stop Albany's incessant gamesmanship."

Assemblymember Patricia A. Fahy said, "As debate wages on regarding so many major issues here in Albany, we cannot lose sight on ensuring that legislation that protects and empowers our environment passes both houses before the end of session, including my bill on Petroleum Storage Surety bill and the Crude Oil Shipment Reporting bill. I'm pleased to have the support of the caucus in moving these bills forward. I continue to urge the rest of my Assembly colleagues to support these important pieces of legislation as we close out this year's session."

Assistant Speaker Felix W. Ortiz said, "Several pieces of important environmental legislation await action in the Legislature in the final days of this session. New York must adopt a more comprehensive approach to regulating toxic chemicals in children's toys, address efforts to increase solar energy in communities, close loopholes in our hazardous waste disposal and deal with the safety issues of crude oil transportation. Leadership in both houses must step up and bring these bills for a vote so that New York can advance a more progressive environmental agenda that protects our state's resources, our children and our families."

Assemblymember William Colton said, "As a lifelong advocate for environmental protection and justice, I urge my fellow colleagues and fellow New Yorkers to commit to and embrace environmental conscientiousness and activism. It is our duty to protect the environment we live in, which we are symbiotically dependent upon, by actively leading the charge to correct the damages we have made as part of our human footprint, address climate change, as well as set the standards and apply the imperative reforms required to achieve a thriving and healthy natural environment. To do so, we must commit to reducing, reusing, and recycling waste; commit to 100% green energy systems; and reinvent our approach from just existing in our natural environment, to responsibly coexisting with our natural environment. We must have a new Green Revolution and correct the negative impacts already made by living in a way that significantly reduces and ultimately eliminates the environmental destructions which threaten our health and our environment. To achieve this we must embrace holistic ecological approaches by passing legislation to achieve these goals."

Founded in January 2014, NYSCEL is a nonpartisan organization of environmentally progressive members of the Senate and Assembly representing districts throughout the State. The organization is a forum for elected officials to consider various legislative and policy issues related to preserving and protecting the environment and public health. NYSCEL holds periodic meetings among members, hosts speakers, and plans other events to educate elected officials and the public and focus attention on the need for action on environmental and public health issues.

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*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****

Legislators To Make Bipartisan Push To Pass Environmental Laws

ALBANY – Tomorrow, Thursday June 11th at 11:30 a.m. at the Million Dollar Staircase in Albany, members of the New York State Caucus of Environmental Legislators (NYSCEL) will hold a press conference, calling for passage of several key bills before the end of the regular legislative session, which is scheduled to adjourn next week.

Each of the bills to be announced by members of NYSCEL – a nonpartisan bicameral caucus chaired by Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh – has both Republican and Democratic sponsors, and most have advanced in one or both houses.

WHO: Members of the NYS Caucus of Environmental Legislators

WHAT: Press conference to make bipartisan push to pass environmental laws before end of scheduled session next week

WHEN: Thursday, June 11, 11:30 a.m.

WHERE: Million Dollar Staircase, 3rd Floor across from the Library, Albany, NY

Founded in January 2014, NYSCEL is a nonpartisan organization of environmentally progressive members of the Senate and Assembly representing districts throughout the State. The organization is a forum for elected officials to consider various legislative and policy issues related to preserving and protecting the environment and public health. NYSCEL holds periodic meetings among members, hosts speakers, and plans other events to educate elected officials and the public and focus attention on the need for action on environmental and public health issues.

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