



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham Finishes 2023 with 25 of His Bills Signed into Law

PETE HARCKHAM January 4, 2024

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State Sen. Harckham in Albany

Guides 31 bills into law in 1st year as Senate Environmental Conservation Committee chair
Albany, NY – New York State Senator Pete Harckham is concluding 2023 as his most productive year yet in terms of having legislation he introduced being passed and signed into law, with 25 of his bills receiving signatures from the Governor, up from 23 last year and 16 in 2021.

Additionally, Harckham guided 31 bills into law through the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee during his first year as its chair.

“New York residents and business owners are working hard to strengthen their communities for the challenges ahead, and to aid these efforts I introduced legislation that fights climate change, protects public health and assists our municipalities,” said Harckham. “Whether it entails cutting red tape to move clean energy projects forward, safeguarding infrastructure against storm damage or honoring our veterans, I will continue to partner with stakeholders statewide on innovations and policies that positively impact our wellbeing here in New York.”

Added Harckham, “I am grateful to Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and my colleagues in the State Legislature for their support and hard work in ensuring that these bills moved to the governor’s desk.”

In total, Harckham was the prime sponsor on 187 bills that were introduced or amended, an increase from last year’s total of 176 and 137 from 2021. The State Senate approved 62 of these bills and the full State Legislature approved 32 in 2023.

Notable among Harckham’s bills signed into law this year was [S.6893](#), the “Save the Hudson Act,” which prevents the dumping of radioactive wastewater from the decommissioned Indian Point nuclear power facility into the river.

“It is our duty to protect the economic livelihood of the communities alongside the Hudson River, which is the backbone of the region, any way we can,” said Harckham, “and I am dedicated to keeping this important natural resource as free from contamination as possible.”

Another top bill signed into law, [S.6604](#) reforms regulations for geothermal heating and cooling systems by allowing boreholes for geothermal wells to be dug deeper than 500 feet, which will benefit cities and other densely populated areas statewide where space for this energy innovation is limited.

“As we work to achieve the ambitious goals in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, the best way to ramp up our fight against the climate crisis is to reduce our use of fossil fuels and push toward a carbon-free future,” said Harckham. “Enacting this law shows how New York can help lead the nation to positively impact our environment and boost our economy with green jobs.”

One bill introduced by Harckham and enacted this year was prompted and advanced through his work for four years as chair of the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse. [S.2099C](#)—“Matthew’s Law”—allows pharmacists in New York to dispense testing kits to detect drug adulterants like fentanyl.

Residents statewide applauded the enactment of Harckham’s bill [S.2988A](#) requiring utilities and cable television companies to trim the vines growing on and around utility poles as part of their regular maintenance. Overgrown vines on utility poles can cause power and service outages, especially in ice storms.

A key bill of Harckham’s enacted this year was among the 89 bills passed out of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee and the 31 signed into law in 2023. [S.3365](#) now requires the disclosure of insurance information on permit applications for the construction of pipelines traversing any freshwater wetlands. The necessary information, which will be shared with relevant municipalities, includes the name of the insurance company covering the construction project, the amount of coverage and what is covered under the plan.

Harckham's Save the Hudson Act and geothermal borehole bill were among the key legislation passed out of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee and signed into law this year.

Three of Harckham's signed bills honor veterans statewide:

- [S.5372A](#) and [S.5394A](#) authorize the Adjutant General (the state's highest ranking military official in the New York National Guard) to present in the name of the State Legislature medals known as the "New York State Afghanistan War Commemorative Medal" and the "New York State Iraq War Commemorative Medal," respectively, to members of the armed forces who served in those two conflicts; and
- [S.4085A](#) designates a portion of Route 121 in Lewisboro as the "John Jay High School Veterans Memorial Highway."

Other enacted laws from legislation that Harckham introduced now increase the age from 10 to 14 that minors can legally operate an all-terrain vehicle ([S.2702](#)); continue efforts by Rockland County's Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Children to thwart sales of alcohol to minors ([S.6538](#)); and require children's non-regulated camps to ascertain whether an employee or volunteer is listed on the sex offender registry ([S.6063](#)).

A number of Harckham's bills enacted by Governor Hochul benefit municipalities:

- [S.3594](#) lowers the number of petitioners necessary to call for a vote on increasing the amount of funding for a library;
- [S.5541](#) names a portion of Crompond Road (Route 202) in the Town of Yorktown as the "Captain Kenneth Sgroi Memorial Highway"; Sgroi, a lieutenant in the Yorktown Police

Department, was only 37 years old when an abrupt illness took his life in January 2023; he was promoted posthumously to the rank of captain in honor of his dedication and service to the department;

- [S.5886](#) exempts Buchanan Engine Company No. 1 from a residential requirement for members in order to maintain a force of capable volunteers for the department;
- [S.6062](#) waives residency requirements for the Putnam County Commissioner of Planning, Development and Public Transportation; and
- [S.6363A](#) expands the charter of the South Salem Exempt Volunteer Firemen's Benevolent Association to help increase membership.

Lastly, the most recently enacted bill of Harckham's was the Green Light Law ([S.5397](#)), which now allows mobile crisis response staff members to equip their personal vehicles with a green emergency light and use them while responding to emergency calls. Green lights are an effective tool to alert drivers that they must pull over to allow for emergency vehicles to go by. This procedure allows for timely responses to emergency calls.

For complete information on all legislation sponsored by Senator Harckham, please visit: www.nysenate.gov/senators/pete-harckham/legislation.