



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## SENATOR ANDREW LANZA BLASTS DEC FOR STALLING ON PHRAGMITE REMOVAL - Staten Island Continues to Burn While DEC Fiddles

ANDREW J LANZA September 8, 2010

In light of the most recent series of brush fires that have broken out on Staten Island this week, Senator Andrew Lanza is blasting the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for their lack of action with regards to phragmite removal. For years now elected officials on Staten Island – both Republican and Democrat - have pled with DEC to protect residents from these invasive and combustible weeds which cause dangerous brush fires. Senator Lanza says “Enough is enough.”

Lanza asked, “How many life-threatening phragmite fires must Staten Island endure before DEC does something about this?” Lanza would like to remind DEC that phragmites are an invasive, non-native species of weeds which have been the proven source of numerous brush fires across Staten Island. Lanza said, “It is absurd that these weeds are being protected while homeowners continually have their property put at risk, and residents and firefighters have their lives endangered.”

Lanza has previously called upon DEC to remove these phragmites and create a buffer zone to protect the people and property of Staten Island. Lanza also sent a letter to DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis today, however he is unwilling to wait any longer for action. Due to DEC’s inaction, Senator Lanza is simultaneously introducing State legislation that will require DEC to remove phragmites in all instances where more than 5 continuous acres of phragmites exist. After the weeds are eradicated they can then be replaced with specific native wetland plantings.

“It is time that DEC stop putting dangerous weeds ahead of the people and property of Staten Island,” said Senator Lanza. Lanza urges Staten Islanders to join his fight to have DEC remove dangerous phragmites by signing his online petition at [lanza.nysenate.gov](http://lanza.nysenate.gov).

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