



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

Senate Passes Earth Day Bill Package

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| ISSUE: **ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT, ORGANIC FARMING, RENEWABLE ENERGY, GOING GREEN**

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The New York State Senate today passed a package of six bills that celebrate Earth Day by promoting the use of renewable energy, reducing harmful pollutants, and protecting sharks and other vulnerable species.

“New York’s economic future is a green future, and the bills we passed today will help pave the way for employers to address their growing energy needs in an environmentally

conscious way and protect our natural resources and wildlife for generations to come,” said Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma).

New York State is experiencing a lag in the development of solar and energy storage segments of the energy sector. A bill passed today (S2522) sponsored by Senator George D. Maziarz (R-C, Newfane) would help attract and retain these growing industries by providing a clear incentive for businesses to make capital investments in solar and energy storage manufacturing and development by providing tax credits. It would create new jobs, increase economic investment, reduce harmful emissions, and help New York meet its goals for renewable energy development.

The legislation builds upon Governor Cuomo's expansion of the “NY-Sun” program, which was outlined in an announcement earlier this week, by providing a refundable tax credit up to a maximum of \$25 million per year for four years to further increase manufacturing, development, and research for solar or battery storage industries. Manufacturers might also be eligible for a 10 percent credit for the expenses associated with conducting research or manufacturing.

“I can think of no better way to honor Earth Day than by the passage of this legislation,” said Senator Maziarz, Chairman of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee and Prime Sponsor of this legislation. “By adopting this bill, New York will create jobs, protect the environment and become a national leader in solar energy. In fact, this is the first time a major solar incentive program has passed in either the Senate or Assembly in New York. This bill does so much for the current and future of energy alternatives in this state and I am extremely pleased that it was passed today.”

“This bill would be great for promoting renewable energy, great for encouraging solar development, and great for providing real incentive to solar and battery storage

manufacturers to invest in New York by building plants and creating jobs here,” Senate Republican Conference Leader Dean G. Skelos said.

Dr. William Acker, Executive Director of The New York Battery and Energy Storage Technology (NY-BEST) Consortium, said, “NY-BEST congratulates Senator Maziarz on the NYS Senate's passage today of his bill, S2522. By establishing tax credits to qualified manufacturers of energy storage technologies in New York State, the bill would implement one of the major recommendations of NY-BEST's Roadmap for Energy Storage and further strengthen New York's position as a leader in energy storage. These technologies, which include advanced batteries and related devices, are transforming the way the electricity grid and transportation systems operate worldwide. We are thankful to Senator Maziarz for his support and leadership on behalf of the energy storage industry and for his recognition of the valuable energy, economic and environmental benefits of these technologies.”

The Senate also passed legislation (S1600) sponsored by Senator Mark Grisanti (R, North Buffalo) to reduce the amount of mercury that ends up in homes and the waste stream. The bill details the amount of mercury to be allowed in fluorescent lamps and normal-life and long-life bulbs. These light bulbs sometimes contain significant amounts of mercury, which can be released and become an environmental hazard when it enters the waste stream.

“As Chairman of the Environmental Conservation Committee, I am proud of the Senate's passage today of this bill to protect the environment by limiting the amount of mercury in light bulbs,” Senator Grisanti said. “It would prohibit the sale of lighting that exceeds the appropriate levels of mercury and provide stiff monetary penalties for violators. Over the course of time, the passage of this bill will be instrumental in protecting our communities from toxic wastes that can be extremely detrimental to our health.”

Senator Grisanti also sponsored a bill (S1711B) that would prohibit the sale, trade or distribution of shark fins in the state. The fins are a delicacy in some cultures, but finning is damaging the fragile shark population and could have significant effects on the oceanic food chain. New York has already banned the practice of finning a shark, and this legislation would further protect sharks by not allowing shark fin to be possessed, sold, or traded.

“The decimation of the shark population is a serious concern as it has a detrimental trickle-down effect for the entire oceanic food chain,” Senator Grisanti said. “With the shark population in serious peril and other countries and states passing legislation to protect sharks, New York should be a leader in extending protection to these magnificent animals. I am proud to sponsor and pass this bill in the New York State Senate today.”

Three other bills sponsored by Senator Lee Zeldin (R-C-I, Shirley) were passed today to protect additional ocean species:

- S4220 extends the state Department of Environmental Conservation’s (DEC) authority to regulate whelk and conch, which is essential to maintaining the existing population and preventing over-harvest;

- S4221 extends DEC’s authority to manage the harvest of bay scallops, which are presently at very low population levels, by establishing guidelines such as setting size limits, catch and possession limits, open and closed seasons, and possession and sale. These measures are considered vital to maintaining the viability of the scallop population and to protecting the shellfish industry.

- S4567 protects New York’s declining lobster population by bringing the state into compliance with federal management plans that require a prohibition of lobster harvest in the Long Island Sound for two months each year, between September 8th and November

28th, among other measures.

“Certain fisheries and shellfisheries need additional protection to help increase the populations,” Senator Zeldin said. “These bills will help provide the state with the necessary tools to ensure the viability of these marine resources for the long term.”

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.