



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Earth Day / Arbor Day 2015

DEAN G. SKELOS April 21, 2015

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This Wednesday, April 22nd, is the 45th anniversary of Earth Day. First celebrated in 1970, we have marked April 22nd as a day to celebrate the importance of our natural environment, and to rededicate ourselves to ensuring clean air and water, open spaces, and green, healthy communities.

Similarly, Arbor Day, which this year falls on April 24th, was established in 1872 as a way to encourage farmers and homesteaders to plant trees that would provide shade, shelter, food, fuel and beauty to the nation's open spaces.

And both Earth Day 2015 and Arbor Day 2015 come just a few weeks after the enactment of a new State Budget that reflects our strong commitment to protecting and enhancing New York's natural resources. The new 2015-16 State Budget makes major new investments in important environmental initiatives that will benefit communities throughout the entire State. For example, it includes:

- Environmental Protection Fund (EPF): The budget includes an increase in funding for our local parks, and \$177 million for the EPF. This is an increase of \$15 million over last year and will help ensure clean air and water in communities across the state.
- New York State Water Infrastructure Improvement Act: The budget provides \$200 million over the next three years in Environmental Facilities Corp. grants to municipalities to repair and replace existing wastewater and drinking water infrastructure.
- Environmental Infrastructure: \$152.5 million in new funding is provided for additional improvements to flood control, clean-ups, and environmental restoration projects.

Healthy families and healthy communities depend on clean air, clean water and the quality of our natural environment, and these major new investments are an important step in the right direction.

On Earth day, Arbor Day, and every day, let's keep making our environment a top priority.