



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham, Senate Approve Bill to Support Solar Energy Projects for Schools

PETE HARCKHAM June 8, 2021

| ISSUE: **SOLAR ENERGY, RENEWABLE ENERGY, TAXPAYERS, HIGH ENERGY COSTS**



*Albany, NY* – New York State Sen. Pete Harckham and his Senate colleagues approved a bill (S.6307) this week that extends the time period for the guaranteed recovery of energy performance contract costs from energy savings incurred by school districts. The time extension—from 18 years to 25 years—falls in line with federal standards, and will benefit school districts interested in installing solar energy systems in schools.

“This bill will help school districts that are ready to commit to renewable energy projects like solar for their buildings,” said Harckham, who introduced the legislation. “Along with reducing the schools’ carbon emissions and assisting in the fight against climate change, these renewables end up saving taxpayer dollars year after year. I am proud of the wide support this bill has received, especially among students concerned about their environment.”

Harckham met this spring via video conferencing with high schoolers in a group called Students for Climate Action that supported the legislation.

Energy performance contracts have been a successful way for municipalities and school districts to lower their costs while improving efficiency. Energy performance contracts use the projected savings from the performance contract to pay for the project, which is often significantly cheaper than the previous energy costs.

Current state law, though, requires that energy performance contracts must guarantee the recovery of contract costs from recovery savings during the term of the contract, which cannot not exceed 18 years. Harckham’s legislation will allow contracts to not exceed more than 25 years, the same as the federal government.

The extension would have numerous benefits such as energy efficiency and reducing operating costs. These contracts help schools avoid significant upfront costs for renewable energy projects, like solar energy installations, and allow for reinvestments over time. Furthermore, contracts usually result in reduced maintenance costs and reduce the number of emergency repairs.

“I cannot thank Senator Harckham and his staff enough for listening to the youth of New York, supporting a bill that Students for Climate Action helped create, to assist in the

transition to renewable energy, and understanding the need for an easy solar solution for school districts,” said Melissa Parrott, executive director of Students for Climate Action (S4CA). “The students worked hard to pass this bill, and it was the support of Senator Harckham that helped the ‘Students for Solar Act’ pass the Senate unanimously.”

“I cannot thank Senator Pete Harckham enough for all that he’s done to get the Students for Solar Act passed,” said Harrison Bench, deputy director of S4CA. “Over the past four years, Students for Climate Action has been working to change this overly burdensome state education regulation. By extending the maximum energy performance contract cost recovery hundreds, if not, thousands, of schools across New York will now be able to pursue green energy projects: solar, wind, and geothermal. Thank you again to Senator Harckham for believing in this bill, for believing in the power of youth climate activism, and for believing in the green energy future we so desperately need here in New York.”

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2021-S6307**

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate

- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Relates to extending the time period for recovery of energy performance contract costs incurred by school districts

April 21, 2021

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Pete Harckham**

Do you support this bill?