

THE ADIRONDACK COUNCIL , AUDUBON NEW YORK, CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES OF NEW YORK, EPL/ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES, NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL, NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS, NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP, PACE ENERGY & CLIMATE CENTER, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY IN NEW YORK, TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN

**GROUPS LAUD NYS LEGISLATURE FOR PASSING TWO ENVIRONMENTAL "SUPER BILLS,"
URGE GOV CUOMO TO SIGN BILLS INTO LAW
*GREEN SUPER BILLS INCLUDE MEASURES TO PROTECT NY'S WATER FROM WASTEFUL
WITHDRAWALS, MAKE COMMUNITIES MORE SUSTAINABLE***

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(ALBANY, NY)-Many of New York's leading public policy, environmental, transportation and energy groups today applauded the New York State Legislature for unanimously passing two of the environmental "Super Bills" for 2011. The green priorities taken up by the State Legislature this year include a bill that will protect the state's water from wasteful withdrawals and legislation that will make our communities more sustainable and pedestrian-friendly by encouraging "Complete Streets." The groups are now calling on Governor Cuomo to sign the measures into law.

"By passing legislation that will safeguard New York's waters from wasteful withdrawals and encouraging Complete Streets, the State Senate and Assembly accomplished two major environmental priorities," said Rob Moore, Executive Director of Environmental Advocates of New York. "These actions put New York State on the path to a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable future."

The groups cited the efforts of Assembly members Robert Sweeney and David Gantt, and Senators Mark Grisanti and Charles Fuschillo, as deserving of recognition this year. These lawmakers put extra effort into garnering passage of the two Super Bills.

Darryl Banks, Deputy Director for Conservation Strategies and External Affairs for The Nature Conservancy in New York, said, "The Nature Conservancy commends Senator Grisanti and Assemblyman Robert Sweeney for their work as champions for New York's water resources during this legislative session. The water management legislation passed in both houses will create a statewide program that protects New York's ecologically and economically important water resources. In New York, our rivers, lakes and streams provide clean drinking water for millions of residents, offer countless opportunities for recreation generating millions of dollars in tourism revenue, and have historically supported fisheries from brook trout to oysters, some of which are now critically endangered."

"Senator Grisanti, hands down, earned the Rookie of the Year recognition. As Chairman of the Environmental Conservation Committee, the freshman Senator preformed like a senior statesman," said Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment. "Sen. Grisanti did an exceptional job championing the Water Resources Protection Act and his leadership secured critical protection for our state's priceless fresh water resources."

"Environmentalists have had a good year legislatively, in no small part thanks to Sen. Grisanti's strong

freshman year and the spectacular leadership of Assembly member Sweeney," said Richard Schrader, NY Legislative Director of the Natural Resources Defense Council.

"Assemblyman Sweeney and Senator Grisanti are true champions of New York's Environment, and we applaud their bi-partisan efforts to improve protection of our freshwater," said Albert E. Caccese, Executive Director of Audubon New York. "As Governor Cuomo already declared his commitment to our natural resources by maintaining the Environmental Protection Fund in this year's budget, we urge him to build off this strong start by signing this important bill into law."

The 2011 environmental Super Bills that were passed unanimously and are now slated to become law are:

- Water Withdrawal Permitting Program, (A.5318-A / S.3798), will protect all New York's waters from wasteful withdrawals by requiring anyone with the capacity to withdraw more than 100,000 gallons of water per day to first obtain a permit from the Department of Environmental Conservation.
- Complete Streets, (S.5411-A / A.8366), will ensure that New York's future roads take into account the needs of all users-bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and passengers, motorists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities-and help reduce climate-altering greenhouse gas emissions.

"Right now only one-third of New York's waters are protected from overuse. Large industrial users can take as much as they want, whenever they want, from the rest of our waters. The Water Withdrawal Permit Program fixes that," said Brian L. Houseal, Executive Director of The Adirondack Council. "Requiring the industries that benefit from our world-class water to first obtain a permit is a small price to pay, but one that will reap big dividends for all New Yorkers for generations to come."

"The Complete Streets bill will save lives and make it easier for New Yorkers to leave the car at home," said Kate Slevin, Executive Director of Tri-State Transportation Campaign. "Making it safe for people of all ages to walk and bike will lead to healthier communities and cleaner air. We applaud Senator Charles Fuschillo for championing the Complete Streets bill and ensuring its passage."

"The passage of two super bills this year is a good start," said Laura Haight, Senior Environmental Associate for the New York Public Interest Research Group. "We look forward to bigger and better environmental victories next year."

Passage of these bills represents major progress in the first year of a two-year session, but work to advance environmental protections remains to be done in 2012. The remaining three Super Bills are:

- Closure of the Hazardous Waste Loophole for Fracking Waste, (A.7013/S.4616), would end special exemptions that allow the gas industry to circumvent requirements for hazardous waste disposal. This bill would require all gas drilling waste that meets the definition of hazardous waste be subject to regulations related to its generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal. The Assembly passed this bill in June.
- Global Warming Pollution Cap, (A.5346/S.2742-A), would require that climate-altering pollution from all sources is cut by 80 percent by the year 2050. These are the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that scientists say will help us avert the worst impacts of climate change. The Assembly passed this bill for the fourth year in a row.

Solar Industry Development & Jobs Act, (A.5713-C), would create new jobs and jumpstart investment in New York's growing solar energy industry by requiring state utilities and energy service companies to purchase solar renewable energy credits. Neither house acted upon this legislation.

"Among the victories of the 2011 NYS Legislative Session is the Power NY package. While we are disappointed the Solar Jobs Act was not part of the final package, provisions to scale up energy efficiency, rigorously study solar, reduce power plant pollution, and better site power plants in order to protect New York communities are all major steps forward for New York's clean energy policies. We look forward to working with Governor Cuomo and legislative leaders to finish the job on solar next session," said Jackson Morris, Senior Policy Advisor with Pace Energy and Climate Center.

"The contrast between this year's environmental progress and 2010 is great," said Marcia Bystryn, president of the New York League of Conservation Voters. "Although New York missed a major opportunity by not passing the solar jobs bill, the Assembly and Senate made headway in other important areas, including green jobs and Article X power plant siting legislation. We strongly encourage Governor Cuomo to sign these two 'Super Bills' into law, and we look forward to continued discussions about ways to finally make New York the clean-energy leader it should be."

The Super Bills are selected each year by the Green Panel, which includes representatives of more than a dozen environmental organizations from across the state. Lawmakers receive bonus points for votes in support of the Super Bills in EPL/Environmental Advocates' annual Voters' Guide, the only scorecard that grades legislators according to their votes on bills that would hurt or protect New York's air, land, and water. The green scorecard will be released this fall.