



A.3419 (SWEENEY, ET AL.) S.5689 (THOMPSON)

Summary

This bill would require that all New York State agencies conduct an annual audit of the climate-altering greenhouse gas emissions they emit as a result of their operations. These annual reports would include a calculation of the agency's total greenhouse gas emissions for the year, steps taken to reduce those emissions, as well as actions that could be taken to further reduce global warming pollution.

Explanation

Scientists predict that as a result of increased greenhouse gas emissions, warmer global air temperatures will have negatively impact New York. These impacts include, but are not limited to: an increased number of high ozone days that could lead to a significantly higher number of hospital admissions related to asthma attacks; rising sea levels that can damage coastal infrastructure; dwindling levels of wildlife; and damage to our forests.

In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that global warming is the direct result of human action, particularly the burning of fossil fuels. The Panel went on to say that in order to avoid the worst effects of climate change, we must cut worldwide greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80 percent by the year 2050. To achieve such cuts, New York must reduce its emissions by enacting binding short- and medium-term targets to ensure we are on a sustainable path. However, such targets can only be achieved with accurate data on the sources and volumes of climate-altering pollution.

This bill would ensure that state agencies—the largest energy consumer in New York—are required to keep track of their greenhouse gas emissions and report on steps taken to reduce those emissions. Amassing an accurate and regularly updated greenhouse gas inventory from these agencies will allow the state to begin to get a clearer picture of its pollution profile—a critical first step the state must take to address the challenges of global warming.

Environmental Advocates of New York supports this bill.

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