



ENVIRONMENTAL
ADVOCATES OF NEW YORK

SUPPORTS



Key to Legislative Ratings: Major Benefit Substantial Benefit Beneficial

A.7572 (SWEENEY, ET AL.) **S.4315-A (THOMPSON, ET AL.)**

Summary

To avert the most serious effects of global warming, this bill would direct the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to establish a greenhouse gas emissions limit from all sources in New York State and require that the limit not be greater than statewide emissions for the year 1990. The bill also requires that the statewide limit would be reduced by 20 percent in the year 2020, with five-year incremental reduction targets thereafter, until overall emissions in 2050 are capped at 80 percent below the 1990 level. In addition, the legislation directs the DEC to promulgate regulations requiring annual greenhouse gas emissions reporting by May 1, 2010.

Explanation

In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that the Earth's climate is changing due to human action, particularly the burning of fossil fuels. Scientists have concluded that in order to avoid the worst effects of climate change we need to cut worldwide greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 80 percent. According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, a 450 parts per million, carbon dioxide- equivalent stabilization target should represent the upper limit on concentrations of heat-trapping emissions set by any policy that seeks to help stop global warming.

By stabilizing emissions at this level, scientists believe there's a fair chance of keeping average global temperatures from rising more than 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit. Increases of more than 3.6 degrees are likely to dangerously interfere with our climate. And the longer we wait to make deep reductions, the more difficult maintaining our quality of life becomes. Reports by Environmental Advocates of New York and others have catalogued the negative effects that will result from warmer temperatures. These include, but are not limited to: more high ozone days; rising sea levels that will damage coastal infrastructure; dwindling wildlife habitat; threats to public health; and damage to forests and other natural resources.

Momentum is building to cut climate pollution. States including California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon and Washington have passed laws that set comprehensive greenhouse gas reduction targets. In addition, many other states have adopted policies through executive order or agency action to achieve such reductions.

For decades, New York has been a national leader with regard to meeting the country's most pressing environmental challenges. When combined with the state's role in developing the country's first regional plan to cut carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, New York's ongoing energy efficiency and renewable portfolio standards, and the pending adoption of California's lower greenhouse gas emissions standard for vehicles, the significant economy-wide reductions in greenhouse gas emissions required by this measure would put the state on the path to a sustainable future while growing our legacy as an environmental leader.

Environmental Advocates of New York strongly supports this bill.

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