

# GREEN SHEET | New York

A Publication of Environmental Advocates of New York • MAY/JUNE 2008 Vol. 13, No. 3



**ENVIRONMENTAL  
ADVOCATES OF NEW YORK**

YOUR GOVERNMENT WATCHDOG

## GLOBAL WARMING BY THE NUMBERS

**400,000**—Square miles of Arctic sea ice that has melted in the last 30 years

**2030**—Year by which Glacier National Park will be glacier-free

**15-37%**—Plant and animal species global warming could wipe out by 2050

**1**—Rank of the year 2005 as the hottest on record (tied with 1998)

**0**—Number of bills passed by Congress to cut global warming pollution

**?**—Number of bills passed by New York State to cut global warming pollution (at press time)

\*Environmental Defense Fund

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## The Changing Climate of Climate Change

For years, scientists and environmentalists have called for federal action to address growing concerns related to global climate change. So it's significant that for the first time the U.S. Senate publicly debated legislation that could determine how the nation responds to the threat of global warming.

America's Climate Security Act couldn't have come any sooner. The bipartisan bill would reduce global warming pollution by about two percent per year. By the year 2050, emissions levels would be reduced 70 percent below current levels. According to scientists, reductions like these would help us avoid the most severe impacts of the changing climate.

While the final Senate votes are disappointing—48 Yeas, 36 Nays, 16 No Shows—the Act brought national attention to arguably the most pressing environmental issue of our time, which until now had been neglected by the federal government.

And although the national spotlight briefly shifted to Washington, D.C., state-level proposals have been moving forward for years. In New York, state lawmakers are currently debating the merits of several bills that would spell out what the state can do to stave off global warming in the years ahead.

### GLOBAL WARMING POLLUTION CAP

One of the environmental community's priority Super Bills, the Cap would establish a greenhouse gas emissions limit from all sources. The bill would then further reduce pollution until

overall emissions reach 80 percent below 1990 levels.

The Cap passed the Assembly on Earth Day and a similar bill was recently introduced in the Senate. Combined with the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), the reductions in global warming pollution required by the Cap would put New York on the path to a sustainable future while growing our legacy as an environmental leader.

### CLIMATE CHANGE SOLUTIONS ACT & FUND

This legislation would invest proceeds from the sale of emissions allowances from the RGGI in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

A key component of the RGGI, the 10-state partnership to stabilize and reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, relates to the initial distribution of emissions allowances. In New York, nearly 100 percent of the approximately 64.3 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions allowances will be auctioned annually to polluters in a competitive, transparent market. It only makes sense that proceeds from these auctions are invested in energy efficiency and developing clean, renewable sources of power.

Increased investment in energy efficiency will protect New Yorkers from the harmful effects of air pollution created by fossil fuel-fired power plants. These harmful effects include asthma attacks and premature deaths in seniors, increased mercury contamination, destruction of forests by acid rain, and more.

Energy efficiency investment will also drive down the cost of implementing the regional plan. The RGGI State Working Group estimates that

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# STAFF NEWS

• Environmental Advocates of New York welcomes Alison Jenkins as Fiscal Policy Program Director. In her new role, Alison analyzes the New York State budget and tracks spending on projects that affect the health of the environment. She also evaluates the state's ability to implement existing environmental laws.

Alison earned a B.A. in Psychology from St. Michael's College in Vermont, and M.A. in Public Policy from the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, SUNY.

• Congratulations to Jackson Morris, who recently became Air & Energy Program Associate after tracking lawmakers' votes on significant environmental measures as our Government Affairs Associate. In his new role, Jackson leads our efforts to reduce global warming pollution by cutting carbon dioxide emissions and promoting energy efficiency and clean energy.

• Development Assistant Libby Whitney, who had been with Environmental Advocates of New York since 2006, has left us to continue her career in the development field at the Bronx Zoo. Libby has been a dedicated member of our staff and instrumental to our fundraising efforts. We wish her the best of luck in her career; she will be missed by many in the Capital Region.



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# DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

With the scheduled end of the State Legislative Session on the horizon, it's the time of year when we scratch our heads and wonder, "What's going to get done this year?"

One thing that needs to get done is something substantial on climate change. As of this writing, the U.S. Senate has failed to pass the Climate Security Act, leaving states in the driver's seat for addressing this critical issue. New York is poised to do just that.

In April, the Assembly passed a number of bills that would help define New York's response to this global challenge. The Climate Change Solutions Act & Fund were passed on Earth Day Lobby Day, thanks to the leadership of Bob Sweeney (D-Lindenhurst), Chair of the Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee, and Mike Gianaris (D-Astoria). This legislation would chart the course for state investments in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other actions to reduce climate pollution.

The Assembly also passed the Global Warming Pollution Cap, which would require New York to reduce climate-altering emissions 80 percent by 2050—again, thanks to the efforts of Bob Sweeney.

But it takes two houses to make a law. And the Senate is moving to catch-up to their Assembly colleagues. Senator Carl Marcellino (R-Huntington) moved his version of the Climate Change Solutions

Act & Fund out of committee for the first time since it was introduced last year. We are hopeful that the Senator will push to get this bill to the floor for a vote, but there are no guarantees.



And in a surprising move, Senator Tom Morahan (R-Rockland) introduced the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Control Act, with Senators Frank Padavan, Charles Fuschillo, and John Flanagan as early co-sponsors. This bill is almost identical to the Global Warming Pollution Cap. Due to its late-session introduction, the measure will move straight to the all-powerful Rules Committee. Senator Antoine Thompson and 10 Senate minority members have introduced their own version of the bill, as well.

Keep your eyes on your inbox. If you are already signed up as an e-Advocate, expect email action alerts on these bills (and others) as the end of session approaches. And please take a moment to act. We're going to need you to add your voice to the chorus of New Yorkers demanding action on climate change.

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## CLIMATE CHANGE

doubling energy efficiency spending will reduce household bills by \$66 in 2015, and by \$109 in 2021. And even if rates rise as part of the program's implementation, electric bills will likely fall for most consumers.

Increased energy efficiency could also reduce the need to build new sources of generation, another factor driving up electric bills. In addition, slowing the growth of energy demand through efficiency has the added benefit of further reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

### RGGI

Speaking of the RGGI, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority are currently

engaged in rule-making to implement the RGGI; revised rules were released for public comment in May. Public hearings were held in Albany, and on Long Island. Given that the RGGI begins in January 2009, we're hopeful that this latest round of comments goes quickly.

The New York State Legislative Session ends soon. We'll be in touch to let you know if any new laws were passed to reduce the state's carbon footprint. Visit [www.eany.org](http://www.eany.org) for the latest news from Albany.

# 2008 BILLS ON THE MOVE

Every week during the State Legislative Session, Environmental Advocates of New York reviews every bill introduced by lawmakers. We then issue a memo evaluating any measure that would have significant environmental impact. Bills that would benefit the environment receive one to three “trees” rating their effectiveness, while bills that would harm our air, water and land receive one to three “smokestacks.”

As the end of session draws near, Environmental Advocates’ highlights the Top 5 environmental measures of 2008:

## SUPER BILL

**Global Warming Pollution Cap** (A.10303/S.8100) – The Cap would cut climate change pollution from all sources 80 percent by the year 2050.

## SUPER BILL

**Wetlands Protection Act** (A.7133/S.3835) – The Act would close a gaping loophole in New York’s wetlands protection laws by providing the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) with regulatory authority over the state’s freshwater wetlands of an acre or more, regardless of whether that wetland had previously been mapped by the agency. Currently, the state only has authority over wetlands 12 acres or larger in size.

## SUPER BILL

**Bigger Better Bottle Bill** (A.8044-A/S.5850-A) – This bill would update New York’s most successful recycling program by expanding the definition of “beverage” in state law to include non-carbonated drinks such as water and iced tea, and would also direct unclaimed deposits to the Environmental Protection Fund.

**E-Waste** (A.8444-B/S.7563) – This bill would require manufacturers to submit an electronic waste manufacturing plan for DEC approval. By 2014, New York manufacturers would be required to collect a minimum of one-quarter of their annual equipment sales (by weight) each year and increase that collection rate to 45 percent by 2017.

**Net Metering** (A.9022/S.8059) – A bill to expand New York’s net metering policy to include wind and fuel cell technologies, as well as update the size of all net-metered systems. Net metering is the practice that credits consumers for the clean energy they generate themselves.

For a complete list of memos and bill ratings, visit [www.eany.org/capitolwatch](http://www.eany.org/capitolwatch).

\*Bill numbers beginning with the letter “A” are Assembly bills and those beginning with “S” are Senate bills.

## The Great Lakes & Global Warming

As the U.S. Senate debated historic legislation that would determine how the country responds to the threat of global warming, a new report was released that examines the impact of a warming climate on the Great Lakes.

*Great Lakes Restoration & the Threat of Global Warming*, released by the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, documents the likely impacts climate change will have on the lakes, including lower lake levels, more sewage overflows, and increased pressure to divert Great Lakes water.

For more information, or to access the complete report, visit [www.healthylakes.org](http://www.healthylakes.org).

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## BOARD NEWS

Environmental Advocates of New York welcomes two new members to our Board of Directors.

- Catalina Hayata is a Vice President of Merrill Lynch & Co.’s Corporate Principal Investments Group where she analyzes and executes debt and equity investments in Latin American companies. While serving on the Board, she hopes to make a local impact and affect change in her community by increasing awareness for environmental legislation and policy. Catalina looks forward to taking the first step in involving private industries such as Merrill Lynch & Co., in Environmental Advocates’ work.

- Andrew Zalasin is Chief Financial Officer and General Partner with RRE Ventures in New York City. He oversees general operations and negotiates and executes investments and strategic alliances. Andrew has been instrumental in RRE Ventures’ investments in RecycleBank, a company that supports programs designed to increase community curbside recycling rates, and Tendril, an organization that enables consumers to manage their consumption and supply of energy in intelligent, efficient ways.

We extend a warm welcome to both Catalina and Andrew and look forward to working with them.



New Board member Catalina Hayata with Board President Irv Flinn (left) and Executive Director Rob Moore.

# BECOME AN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE TODAY!

Stay up-to-date on statewide environmental issues by becoming a member of Environmental Advocates of New York for just \$35. Membership includes a subscription to our bi-monthly *Green Sheet New York* newsletter and a copy of EPL/Environmental Advocates' annual *Voters' Guide*.

Please be sure to include your address with your payment. For more information, contact **Deb Sgambelluri at 518.462.5526, ext. 230.**

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