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Scoring NY Legislators' Environmental Records in the Trump Era Oil Slick Awardee Announced as 2017 Environmental Scorecard Released

Albany – New York’s state legislators completed their first Legislative Session against the backdrop of the Trump presidency, at a time when Congress and the Administration have sought the roll back of dozens of health and environmental protections.

EPL/Environmental Advocates documented legislators’ voting records on issues such as climate action, plastic waste, water quality, and much more. The organization also announced its environmental champions, and bestowed the dubious Oil Slick Award to a member of the state Senate who has gone above and beyond in his efforts to undermine and harm New York’s air, water, and climate.

[See the 2017 Environmental Scorecard here.](#)

2017 Overview

Just as New York’s Legislative Session got underway, the president-elect’s cabinet picks were moving through the confirmation process in the U.S. Senate, and it was clear we would be faced with the most anti-federal-government government ever assembled. The Legislature and Governor Cuomo were, however, able to come together to deliver on a number of accomplishments, including a \$2.5 billion clean water infrastructure investment within the state budget, establishing of the statewide Drinking Water Quality Council, and passage of eight pieces of pro-environmental legislation which await the Governor’s pen.

Peter Iwanowicz, executive director of EPL/Environmental Advocates said, “The state Assembly, led by Speaker Carl Heastie and Environmental Conservation Chair Steve Englebright, continued their remarkable efforts to make New York State a true leader. However, many measures died once again in the state Senate where Independent Democratic Conference Leader Jeff Klein partnered with Republican Leader John Flanagan to snuff out progress.”

With strong bipartisan support, the Assembly overwhelmingly passed measures such as a constitutional amendment to guarantee New Yorkers the right to clean air, water, and a healthful environment, as well as the landmark Climate and Community Protection Act. Both measures died in the Senate where leaders took up four “smokestack” bills, including:

- Measures to override local governments’ law to cut plastic bag waste.
- Senator Flanagan’s clean energy jobs killer, which would have eliminated State

funding for programs that help cut energy bills, put people to work in the wind and solar industry, and lower the cost of electric vehicles.

- A giveaway to Big Oil to be exempt from fees to the state Oil Spill Fund, which helps communities clean up and recover when a spill occurs.

In all, 78 Assembly Members and 16 Senators earned a perfect score of 100, while 12 Assembly Members and 2 Senators, including this year's Oil Slick Awardee, earned failing grades.

Legislative Leaders

Amongst legislative leaders, Speaker Heastie, Senate Minority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assemblyman Englebright, and Assembly Energy Chair Amy Paulin all scored 100s. Meanwhile, Senate co-leaders Flanagan and Klein earned equal scores of a dismal 71, while Senate Environmental Conservation Chair Tom O'Mara and Energy Chair Joe Griffo earned just 68 points. Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb had the lowest score amongst all leaders with 62 points.

Environmental Champions

Two Republicans Assembly Members stood out in 2017, breaking with party leaders, and putting their constituent's interests and call for action above party dogma: Assemblymen Anthony Palumbo (R-Riverhead) and Andrew Raia (R-Northport). Both members supported the Climate and Community Protection Act, the Environmental Bill of Rights, and scored strongly overall.

And 7 members of both houses continued to shine, building upon their long-time records as true champions of our environment and public health, including:

- Assemblywoman Deborah Glick (D-Manhattan)
- Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo)
- Senator Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan)
- Assemblyman Joe Lentol (D-Brooklyn)
- Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton (D-Ithaca)
- Senator Velmanette Montgomery (D-Brooklyn)
- Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein (D-Brooklyn)

Oil Slick Award

Suffolk County is number one in the state for vehicle emissions and sources of air emissions that harm public health. Areas have also been devastated by climate change and extreme weather such as Superstorm Sandy, as well as the water contamination crises plaguing the area. Still, Senator Tom Croci (R-Hauppauge) has established a voting record that ignores the needs of the communities he represents. He is also one of only two senators who failed the 2017 Scorecard and, incredibly, is the only Senator who opposed common-sense legislation to prevent Big Oil from turning the iconic Hudson River into an oil barge parking lot.

Iwanowicz added, “It’s hard to square the voting record of Senator Croci with the environment his constituents live, work, and play in. His votes speak for themselves – they are extreme, and place the Senator squarely on the side of the fossil fuel industry, and against the people he was elected to represent.”

The EPL/Environmental Advocates 2017 Environmental Scorecard is the first and only record of New York State lawmakers’ votes on legislation that will affect the environment. The guide has been produced and distributed statewide for more than 45 years. For the complete Scorecard, visit www.episcorecard.org.

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