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Senate Minority Leader Ortt Earns Oil Slick Award for Environmental Malpractice

*Environmental Rights Constitutional Amendment
among important legislation passed this session*

Albany – Today, Environmental Advocates Action (EA Action) released its [2021 Environmental Scorecard](#), which reports the environmental voting records of all New York State lawmakers on legislation found to have a positive or negative impact on New York’s environment. The Scorecard also contains bill information, and the previous year’s score of elected officials.

This year’s Scorecard is being released as voters are getting ready to head to the polls and decide the fate of a ballot measure that would add a right to clean air, clean water, and a healthful environment to the State Constitution.

Both the Senate and Assembly passed this amendment this year and the votes are included in the Scorecard.

Peter M. Iwanowicz, executive director of Environmental Advocates Action said, “Voters can rely on the Scorecard to let them know about their state legislator’s environmental voting record. This year, voters can do more than vote for local candidates, they can vote for a Constitutional Amendment that, if passed, will give every New Yorker a right to clean air and clean water. This election day, you have an opportunity to earn a perfect score by voting YES for Environmental Rights.”

Oil Slick Award

Each year, EA Action gives the Oil Slick Award to a legislator that votes repeatedly against environmental legislation and pushes bad bills that will harm the environment. Senate Minority Leader Robert Ortt’s disregard for clean air and water has been evident for years, but just this year, his “NO” votes were particularly shocking. He voted (for the second time) against giving his constituents the opportunity to amend the state’s Constitution to guarantee the right to clean air and water, and a healthful environment. Senator Ortt also voted against all Electric Vehicle and EV infrastructure bills, and even voted against a moratorium that would keep the water on for thousands of New Yorkers who cannot afford their water bills.

Peter M. Iwanowicz, executive director of Environmental Advocates Action said, “During a time when clean air and water are critical to New Yorkers’ health and the health of our state’s economy, it is unconscionable that Senator Ortt consistently and gleefully votes against legislation that would improve our air, water, and climate. His extreme anti-environmental voting record should make him an outcast, not the Senate Minority Leader. Senate minority members should think very hard if they want to follow Senator Ortt off an environmental cliff.”

2021 Session Highlights

The 2021 legislative session saw several green bills pass, including legislation that would:

- provide voters with the opportunity to add a right to clean air, clean water, and a healthful environment to the State Constitution;
- put an “expiration date” for internal combustion engines for a range of uses, including passenger vehicles, trucks, buses, farm and construction vehicles, and lawn and garden equipment;
- establish the most comprehensive monitoring program for toxic PFAS chemicals in the nation; and
- prohibited utility shutoffs during the COVID-19 state of emergency.

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Environmental Advocates Action (formerly known as EPL/Environmental Advocates) was founded in 1969 as one of the first organizations in the nation to advocate for the future of a state’s environment and the health of its citizens. It is the sister organization of Environmental Advocates NY.

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