



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Antoine M. Thompson

Setting The Record Straight On The Climate Change Pollution Act

ANTOINE M THOMPSON December 7, 2009

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From thundering Niagara Falls to bustling Manhattan, the climate of New York is changing. Records show that spring is arriving earlier, summers are growing hotter, and winters are becoming warmer. These changes are consistent with global warming caused by greenhouse gas emissions.

According to researchers, if greenhouses gas emissions in New York continue to grow unabated, the State can expect dramatic changes in its climate and substantial negative impacts on its economy. Climate change in New York poses risks to human health and to terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Important economic resources such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and water resources are vulnerable to climate change because they are weather dependent.

The New York State Senate's Standing Committee on Environmental Conservation acknowledges that in order to slow global warming, effective adaptation strategies are needed to help reduce emissions.

For decades, New York has been a national leader with regard to meeting the nation's most press-ing environmental challenges. New York's commitment to environmental conservation is illustrated through its role in establishing the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)—the first multi-state, market-based plan to reduce emissions from power plants.

Continuing down the path of environmental conservation and energy interdependence, I, Senator Antoine Thompson propose Senate Bill 4315 "The Climate Change Pollution Act" to

lower greenhouse gas emissions within New York State. Senate Bill 4315 redefines greenhouse gas emissions to include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydro fluorocarbons, per fluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and any other gas determined by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (“NYSDEC”) to be a significant contributor to global warming.

Under Senate Bill 4315, the NYSDEC is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations aimed at decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. However, Senate Bill 4315 strictly prohibits the NYSDEC from adopting regulations or promulgating rules that place disproportionate burdens on environmentally vulnerable communities. Specifically, the NYSDEC will establish limits on greenhouse gas emissions, require annual greenhouse gas emission reports from emission sources, and issue an annual report on the progress of New York’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Researchers predict that if the rate of greenhouse gas emissions is lowered, the projected changes to New York’s climate and economy will be far less dramatic. Undeniably, the environmental choices we make today—in New York, the Northeast, and worldwide—will shape the future of our nation’s economy, environment, quality of life, and determine the climate that future generations inherit. Senate Bill 4315 ensures that New York stays on the path to achieving a sustainable environmental future while strengthening the State’s legacy as an environmental leader.

By reducing emissions today, New York has an opportunity to help protect future generations from the severe impacts of global warming. As a global leader in technology, finance, innovation, and a major source of heat-trapping emissions, New York is well positioned to drive national and international environmental progress in slowing down global warming.

Although New York’s efforts alone will not be sufficient to completely avoid global warming, our State is proud to do its part in preserving humanity’s most important renewable resource, planet Earth. Senator Thompson is Chairman of the Environmental Conservation Committee. He represents parts of Erie and Niagara Counties.

For additional information on Senate Bill 43145 “The Climate Change Pollution Act”, please call (518) 455-3371.