



Memorandum of Support

S.2103-A (Harckham)

Title: An act to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to directing the commissioner to publicly publish an annual report on the environmental radiation surveillance program.

Statement of Support:

Under its mandate under section 3-0301 of New York State Environmental Conservation law to “provide for prevention and abatement of all water, land and air pollution including...radiation,” (Subdivision 1, i), Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regulation 6 NYCRR 380 “sets limits on the radioactive dose to members of the public due to releases of radioactive material to the environment” (Part 380, page 5). The DEC therefore conducts monitoring under the Environmental Radiation Surveillance Program of background levels of radiation at a number of locations around the state to determine the influence of human activity on these levels.

S.2103-A directs the DEC commissioner to post an annual report on radioactive releases or disposals on its website so members of the public may have access to this information without having to submit a request under the Freedom of Information Act. The report shall analyze, in conjunction with the Department of Health, trends and cumulative impacts of these releases or disposals. Monitoring is already required so this bill would then allow the public to access these reports on the DEC website.

As activities of concern to the public are being contemplated or carried out, for example by nuclear power plants in their normal operations or during decommissioning, this bill would help the public understand the impacts of such releases as they participate in sustainable water planning for their regions. For example, approximately 100,000 people take their drinking water from the Hudson River, so they need to be informed about radioactive releases into the river. Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter supports S.2103-A as the public has a right to know what radiation is being released into the environment so they can take effective action to protect human health and fragile ecosystems.

The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Urges Your Support of S.2103-A