



IROQUOIS MESSENGER

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

BOTTLE BILL BROKEN

June 1 should have been a historic day for New York's environment. After a long campaign involving hundreds of groups, businesses, and recycling advocates, a significant victory was achieved when the Governor and the State Legislature approved the Bigger Better Bottle Bill this spring. The expansion to water bottles and other key elements of the new law were scheduled to go into effect June 1st.

But in a surprising decision, on May 29, U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Griesa delayed implementation of all the new updates to the bottle law until April 1, 2010. This ruling went well beyond what Nestle and the other water bottling companies were seeking in their lawsuit. It not only delays the expansion to water bottles, but extends to all other parts of the new law, including the transfer of 80% of the unclaimed deposits to the state and the 1.5 cent handling fee increase for stores and redemption centers.

As a result, the state will lose at least

\$115 million this year in revenue from the unclaimed deposits, which will throw New York's recently enacted state budget out of balance. More than two billion water bottles will end up in the waste stream rather than be recycled.

How did this happen? While many businesses raised concerns that the new law's labeling requirements were impossible to meet by June 1st, the Governor, Assembly and Senate failed to come to an agreement on amending the law in a timely fashion. As a result, the decision to delay the bottle bill was made in court. Although no one could have predicted the judge's decision, this matter need not ever have reached the courtroom.

On Earth Day, almost 50 environmental groups presented awards to Governor David Paterson, Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith, and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver for enacting this important environmental law. Now, we hope they will do everything

in their power to bring the bottle bill back on track as soon as possible so that our environment, our businesses, and our budget will not suffer from this judicial setback.

Redemption centers depend on the income received for each deposit container. Currently that is now 2 cents. This increase to 3.5 cents is long overdue. When the law was written the minimum wage was \$3.35 per hour. Increasing the handling fee is not a bailout or handout. Many centers have closed and other have gone into debt believing relief was in sight.

Closing of these small businesses costs New York more jobs, will increase the size of the redemptions to be handled by the markets and put a hole in the money-raising possibilities for schools, other worthwhile organizations and the "street miners" who cut down our unsightly litter.

Not a Memorial week to be observed with pride.

Joseph Stelling

CLEAN ENERGY AND SECURITY

The American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES, HR, 2454), also called the Waxman-Markey climate and energy bill, is a giant-step as it recognizes climate change. It passed the House Committee on May 11. Of course all bets are off at the moment as Albany reverts to infancy.

The bill is 946 pages long, a good summer read. Here a summary of what it includes:

- A renewable electricity standard that requires an increasing percentage of energy from renewables.
- A cap on emissions through a cap and trade program, promoting an 80

percent cut by 1050. Money from the trade part of the program would offset increased energy costs, prevent international deforestation, help US adopt to climate change, support research in energy efficient technologies, and help transitional workers.

- New coal-fired power plants could be built from 2009-2020 and be expected to adopt carbon capture technologies when they become available. After 2020 all plants would have to capture 65% of emissions.
- Set energy-efficiency standards for lighting products, furnaces, appliances, and all residences and businesses.

- Increase funding for the Energy Worker Training Program. Displaced workers would get up to 156 weeks of income and moving assistance.
- "Cash -for clunkers" to provide a million vouchers up to \$4,500 in value to consumers who trade in older, less-fuel efficient vehicles for cars that get better gas mileage.
- Provisions to help develop "smart grid" technologies.

Would anybody who is willing to read this time please comment on this effort? Is it well meaning or just the result of lobbyist favors?



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SEASONAL EVENTS

Sierra Club Indoor and Outdoor events are all **educational or service programs** that encourage us to Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet. They are free and open to everybody. Parks may charge entry fees.

ExCom meetings — July 8, August 12, September 9, at 7:15 PM at 128 Buffington Rd., Syracuse. **Sierra Iroquois members only**, business and strategy sessions.

INDOOR EVENTS

Indoor programs are held the *last* Wednesday of the month at 7:30 PM, at University United Methodist Church (UUMC), 1085 E. Genesee St. Park and enter on University Ave.

Updates, cancellations and information at newyork.sierraclub.org/iroquois or 492-4745.

TOPIC TBA — SEPTEMBER 30

OUTDOOR EVENTS

Outdoor programs are usually on **Sundays at 2 PM** at various interesting locations. **No RSVP unless specifically requested. Info: Jenna 315-299-7175.**

CORPORATE CHALLENGE — JUNE 23

Volunteer to help Sierra Club meet the goal of 100% recycling for the 27th Syracuse Chargers and JP Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge Race at Onondaga Lake Park. Open to anyone who would like to help us meet the goal. Most volunteers aren't needed until about 4pm. The biggest need is always later. But you are welcome to

help whenever you can throughout the day. Free T-shirts. Contact Lisa Daly right away, since the time is close: 428-1384 or mailto: ldaly@yahoo.com.

PRATT'S FALLS — AUGUST 2

Meet at 2 PM in the parking lot to explore the 2.6-mile North Rim trail. Wrap up with a short walk down the stairs to view the falls. Main park entrance is at 7671 Pratt's Falls Road in Manlius; trailhead begins next to Park Office. Parking \$1 per vehicle. <http://nyfalls.com/pratts.html>.

ROME SAND PLAINS — SEPT 13

Rome Sand Plains is one of only a handful of inland pine-barrens in the nation. Meet at 2 PM. Interpretative signs will teach us about this truly unique area. Online info: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8080.html>

From Oswego Road, travel less than one mile and turn left on Hogsback Road. About 2 miles, on the left-hand side of the road, is the parking area of the Wood Creek Trail, an easy half-mile trail.

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MARCH, JUNE, SEPTEMBER, & DECEMBER.

SUBMIT ARTICLES BY THE 15TH OF THE
PRECEDING MONTH:
DEBBYS@VERIZON.NET

SUBJECT LINE MUST BEGIN WITH IM

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Treehuggers,

Do you twitter, tweet, or whatever? Whether you do or not, we invite you to visit www.meetup.com and visit Syracuse Sierra Club. This is the Iroquois Group Site where all our indoor and outdoor events are listed. If you join, you will receive updates and never miss a great event. Or just visit the site for updates and not opt for e-mail reminders.

My red squirrels have moved on, I hope they are OK. New residents are a pair of chipmunks living under the deck and now two offspring. They are just tiny miniatures of their parents. The four of them must be predicting a long winter as they are storing a warehouse of birdseed under there.

So the bird feeder ground activity is four chippies, up to eight integrated squirrels, (half black, half grey), goldfinches, cardinals, titmice, assorted woodpeckers, red-winged blackbirds, chickadees, blue jays, juncos and more. Inches away from this scene are my totally in-step cats enjoying the scene, with no interest in catching! Maybe they are reincarnated members of Audubon.

The birdhouse is overflowing with sticks as two wrens cheerfully celebrate their new home. The highlight of this bird activity was a huge male turkey, who flew over the house (never saw one fly before). He landed most ungracefully by the feeder, trying not to look embarrassed, and ran off into the woods.

Night visitors include raccoons, 'possum and skunks — one a reverse-type, white with a black stripe.

So this is the end of my backyard update. I hope you all have a fine summer and join me celebrating the critters and trees wherever you go.

Martha Loew