



Memorandum of Support

S.643-C (Kavanagh)/A.7339-A (Glick)

Purpose: Relates to rechargeable battery recycling; adds additional products to the definition of "rechargeable battery"; allows a city with a population of one million or more to enforce through its own agencies.

Statement of Support: The current rechargeable battery recycling law in New York requires battery producers to fund and recycle many types of rechargeable batteries, including those used in toys, cameras, cell phones, and hand power tools. However, the current law does not cover rechargeable batteries that are causing the majority of fires in recycling and waste facilities—batteries that power products such as bicycles, scooters, and hoverboards, also known as e-mobility devices.

Lithium-ion rechargeable batteries are an essential piece of the successful transition away from fossil fuels. These batteries can generate large amounts of energy, and thus pose a greater safety risk than other types of batteries and have been implicated in an increasing number of fires that have caused worker injuries, fatalities, and millions of dollars in damage to trucks, recycling plants, transfer stations, and other waste management facilities. This is a major reason why the full lifecycle of these batteries needs to be considered.

S. 643-C/A.7339-A will amend the current battery recycling law to include the specific types of batteries causing fires, facility destruction, and economic loss. It shifts the responsibility of disposal back to the retailers and manufacturers of rechargeable batteries to take back and properly dispose of unwanted rechargeable batteries. The bill will also amend New York State's Environmental Conservation Law to allow the City of New York to enforce provisions of the rechargeable battery law. This is particularly important due to the proliferation of e-bike and e-scooter use throughout New York City where damaging fires caused by lithium-ion batteries have repeatedly occurred. Enacting S. 643-C/A.7339-A into law will save lives, avert casualties, and avoid continued economic costs on businesses and governments, while also working to ensure the continued use of lithium batteries provides a successful transition away from fossil fuels.

The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Urges Your Support of S.643-C/A.7339-A.