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May 2022 Report

Support Renewable Heat Bills

Buildings are the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in New York State. Heat pumps and other efficient electric appliances are proven and safe, improving air quality and providing much-needed access to cooling. New buildings are the best place to start this transition. A series of bills are in the NYS Assembly and Senate to address this, including the All-Electric Building Act (S6843C / A8431B), Advanced Building Codes, Appliance and Equipment Efficiency Standards Act (S7176 / A8143A) and the Gas Transition and Affordable Energy Act (S8198/A9329). Ask your representatives in Albany to support the Renewable Heat Now bill package.

<https://www.mothersoutfront.org/take-action/support-renewable-heat-now/>

<https://renewableheatnow.org/advocacy2022/>

EPR and Packaging-reduction Bill Introduced

The New York extended producer responsibility (EPR) bill, A10185, was introduced May 5 by Assemblyman Steve Englebright. It comes after a similar EPR program was cut from Gov. Hochul's proposed executive budget. The bill would establish an EPR program for packaging and a packaging responsibility fund. Producers would be required to, either individually or collectively, change packaging designs to reduce waste, pay fees based on the amount of packaging material used and "be responsible for packaging waste disposal" by providing "widespread, convenient and equitable access" to recycling, at a level equal to that of municipal waste. Separately, New York state Sen. Todd Kaminsky has introduced S1185, which also establishes an EPR program for packaging but with significant differences from the one that would be created by A10185. First introduced in January 2021, Kaminsky's bill recently moved out of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee. <https://resource-recycling.com/plastics/2022/05/11/epr-and-packaging-reduction-bill-introduced-in-new-york/>

Climate Change Can Affect Our Mental Health

May is Mental Health Awareness month. Weather events, droughts, wildfires, and flooding are just some of the climate change-related disasters that hit home and affect us in complex physical and psychological ways. A recent report found that seven in ten Americans are at least somewhat worried about climate change, with one in three reporting significant concern. Climate change may be especially scary for those of us with children, and many parents are worried about the ways climate change may affect our children's futures. A 2021 survey of young people found that eight in ten youth aged 16-25 feel that people have failed to care for the planet, and three-quarters reported feeling afraid for the future.

It's important to remember feelings of climate distress are a sign that we care, not a sign that something is wrong with us. For parents, finding the support we deserve can help us channel climate distress into meaningful action to help protect our children and the planet. Important steps you can take include:



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finding a supportive community of climate-concerned parents, taking time to learn about climate solutions, and creating a family emergency plan to prepare for extreme weather.

<https://www.momscleanairforce.org/resources/climate-change-and-mental-health/>

Each May and June, Motorists Should be on the Alert for Turtles Crossing the Road

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/press/125417.html>

In New York, thousands of turtles are killed each year when they are struck by vehicles as they migrate to their nesting areas. According to the NY Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), ways you can help are:

- If you see a turtle on the road, please give turtles 'a brake'. Slow down to avoid hitting it with your car.
- If you can safely stop your vehicle, please consider moving it to the shoulder on the side of the road in the direction it was facing.
- Picking the turtle up by its tail may frighten or injure it. Most turtles can be picked up by the sides of the shell.
- Use caution when moving snapping turtles; either pick her up at the rear of the shell near the tail using two hands, or slide a car mat under the turtle to drag her across the road.
- Please do not take turtles home. All native turtles are protected by law and cannot be kept without a permit. All eleven species of land turtles that are native to New York are declining. Even losing one mature female can have a negative impact on a local population.

Say No to Mulch Volcanoes

Mulch volcanoes are created when mulch gets piled high against a tree. This traps moisture against the trunk and can lead to decay, pest damage, or even tree death. Proper mulching is easy, and it doesn't just lead to healthier trees, it also leads to more money in your pocket because you'll be buying less mulch. You'll also save money on future tree care costs by preventing pest damage and rot.

Follow these tips to keep your new tree healthy when mulching:

- use mulch to cover the ground as far out as the tree's branches reach,
- keep the mulch depth to just 2-4 inches, and
- don't let it touch the trunk of the tree.

For more information on proper tree planting and care, visit DEC's website at

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5303.html>. For everything you've ever wondered about mulch -- and more! -- visit the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County website at <https://bit.ly/3FtfLbW>.