



Riverkeeper's 2019 Legislative Memorandum

Support - S.6758/A.8672 (Kaminsky/Stern) - Support

AN ACT to amend the penal law and the environmental conservation law, in relation to the disposal, possession and acceptance of solid waste and hazardous materials and to establishing crimes related to sand mining.

Riverkeeper strongly supports S.6758/A.8672 (Kaminsky/Stern) proposing to increase criminal penalties for a range of activities related to illegal dumping of construction and demolition materials, hazardous wastes and sand mining operations, in addition to creating a "cradle to grave" tracking system for the movement of such wastes. The new penalties proposed in this legislation will help address pollution issues Riverkeeper members have long suffered: individuals and groups ignoring the law by dumping waste on private or public property and often times harming the environment and public health in the process. Waste materials can contain dangerous contaminants that either directly erodes into or leach into our waters.

Two recent examples of such unlawful practices in the Hudson Valley include:

- In Columbia County, construction and demolition waste were dumped on a property with wetlands that are hydrologically connected to the Hudson River. Despite Court orders to do so, the violator has failed to remove 18 years' worth of dumped debris. The town spent over \$250,000 fighting this individual to no avail.
- In Putnam County, a homeowner arranged to have his backyard filled with 40,000 cubic yards of construction and demolition debris so he could build a pool house. Some of the fill material eroded and was discharged into the Croton Falls Reservoir, a drinking source for nine million New York City and Hudson Valley residents.

The Long Island and Mid-Hudson focused "Operation TrashNet" led to 550 tickets being issued for the illegal disposal of solid waste, 81 illicit dumping sites located and 53 search warrants executed. The severity and prevalence of these crimes point to a lack of penalties sufficient to deter such behavior. This bill will stiffen those penalties and prevent scofflaws from profiting by harming our communities and the environment.

Riverkeeper strongly supports the passage of S.6758/A.8672.

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