



Riverkeeper 2022 Memorandum

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Support - S1031B/A2103C (Stewart-Cousins/Pretlow)

Riverkeeper strongly supports S1031B/A2103C, amending New York State's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) to more equitably consider the impacts of projects on environmental justice and other environmentally overburdened communities. This amendment to SEQRA is long overdue, and its passage would help New York join New Jersey in updating our antiquated environmental review processes to more fully incorporate and consider the impacts of pollution on communities that have long borne its disproportionate brunt.

The SEQRA process under this bill would require applicants and lead agencies to detail the potentially disproportionate adverse health or environmental impacts of their actions to environmental justice communities. In making a determination of significance under SEQRA a, lead agencies will produce a burden report to catalog the potential impacts to such communities. If a project is found to have a disproportionate impact on communities covered by the new law, that project is to be denied by the lead agency.

This legislation has the potential to correct an injustice as a result of our environmental review process that has gone on for far too long, whereby communities with the means can fight to keep polluting facilities out of their neighborhoods, often shifting the burden of siting those facilities to environmental justice and disadvantaged communities.