S.2936 (Kaminsky) and S.2937 (Kaminsky)

Purpose: S.2936 would prohibit the use of #6 fuel oil in a building or facility after July 1, 2023, and S.2937 would prohibit the use of #4 fuel oil after July 1, 2027.

Statement of Support: Fuel oils are what remain from petroleum distillation after the lighter fractions like gasoline and kerosene have been removed. Number 4 fuel oil is a commercial heating oil used in furnaces or boilers to generate heat or in engines to generate power. Number 6 oil is heavier than #4 and needs to be preheated before use. It is used to make asphalt for paving and is burned in some large commercial boilers and electrical power generators which have special systems to preheat the oil.

Both oils can contain high amounts of harmful pollutants, especially sulfur, which forms sulfur dioxide when it burns. However, these viscous, dirty fuels are relatively cheap liquid fuels and are still used in some industrial boilers and old buildings. “In 2011 New York City estimated that the 1% of its buildings that burned fuel oils No. 4 and No. 6 were responsible for 86% of the soot pollution generated by all buildings in the city." Burning these oils also releases carbon dioxide, which exacerbates climate change.

While all fossil fuels cause a worsening of climate change and therefore need to be replaced with clean energy, the low price of natural gas and concerns with pollution have already caused the conversion of many buildings using these fuels, especially #6 oil, to less polluting fuel. The fine particulate matter, heavy metals and sulfur dioxide produced by these fuels cause serious health impacts to humans, including premature death from lung cancer and cardiovascular disease, as well as childhood asthma, especially in lower income neighborhoods where the fuel is more frequently burned.

New York City and Westchester County took steps to phase out these fuels in 2011, with little hardship, and these bills will extend those bans across the state. Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter supports S.2936 and S.2937 to ensure the complete phase-out of #4 and #6 fuel oils, which will result in cleaner air and better health for our communities, plus reduction of carbon dioxide emissions which contribute to climate change as they are replaced by renewable energy.

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Urges Your Support of S.2936 and S.2937

744 Broadway, Albany, NY 12207 • (518) 426-9144 • http://newyork.sierracclub.org