



ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
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Ulster County Legislator Seeks Adoption Of “Green” Policies And Practices In Recognition Of National Pollution Prevention Week September 20-26, 2010

September 19, 2010 (Kingston, New York) In recognition of National Pollution Prevention Week Ulster County Legislator Robert Parete (D-Stone Ridge) has proposed a series of initiatives that will reduce and eliminate toxic chemicals in county facilities. This year marks the 20th celebration of Pollution Prevention Week.

In appreciation of this milestone, and for the demand to “green” county government, Ulster County Legislator Robert Parete outlines his plan to reduce pollution on county owned and leased property, and calls on his colleagues in county government to implement additional “green” facility management policies. It has been estimated that Americans spend up to 90% of their time indoors, many common products and equipment contain toxic chemicals that may lead to a variety of health problems. With an eye towards creating a safe work environment, Legislator Parete has formally introduced the following resolutions that outline pollution prevention processes in county-owned and leased facilities:

· **Green Cleaning Products**

Purchase and use Green Cleaning Products that reduce the presence of dangerous chemicals with less toxic products, while creating a cleaner and healthier work environment. Green cleaning reduces the incidence of asthma attacks caused by dust and chemical allergens and improves indoor air quality by reducing airborne dust and chemical gases.

· **Low or No Volatile Organic Compound (VOCs) Paints and Coatings.**

Utilize paints and coatings that contain no or low Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) in all renovation and new construction projects. Traditional paints and coatings emit gases that can harm human health instantly and after long-term exposure. These gases are also known as volatile organic compounds. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, concentrations of VOCs are up to 10 times higher indoors than outdoors.

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Both proposals would require that any product purchased and used by Ulster County meet standards set by Green Seal. Products that are certified under the GS-37 program for Cleaning Products and GS-11 for Paints and Coatings, respectively, are permissible. Green Seal is an independent, non-profit organization that uses science-based standards and the power of the marketplace to create a more sustainable world. The green cleaning product market continues to expand, more cleaning products and competition are available in the marketplace which will lower costs

“The Legislature has an obligation and authority to enact policies that improve indoor air quality and protect county employees, customers and visitors. Ulster County must strive to use products that are free of dangerous chemicals, and implement practices that conserve and protect our natural resources. ” Said Legislator Parete.

Legislator Parete calls on his colleagues in county government to adopt policies on the following topics:

- ▶ Implement construction project clean-up policies and practices to require as much of the waste materials to be recycled as possible.
- ▶ Implement a comprehensive electronics recycling policy, including a computer disposal policy.
- ▶ Establish a special “Green” capital program that replaces older, less efficient systems with state-of-the-art equipment and systems. Examples include lighting and window replacement, low-water-use restroom equipment and Geo-Thermal heat pumps that provide heating and cooling.
- ▶ Use daytime cleaning in county offices to reduce the need to consume electricity during non-business hours.
- ▶ Implement a video and telephone conferencing policy for employee development needs and as the first choice for use with remote county business meetings and events to reduce auto use for travel.
- ▶ Implement policy to exchange documents electronically whenever possible rather than printing hard copies.
- ▶ Improve drinking water fountains as an alternative to using purchased water in plastic bottles.
- ▶ Purchase smaller buses for Ulster County Area Transit that hold fewer passengers and conserve more energy by using less fuel;
- ▶ Retrofit diesel vehicles to reduce emissions and use low sulfur diesel fuel.
- ▶ Create a policy establishing, “Healthy Selections” vending machines in county buildings.