

Press Republican
February 21, 2010

Gillibrand pushes for cleaner air standards

By JOE LoTEMPLIO, Staff Writer

PLATTSBURGH — U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand has offered legislation intended to clean up the air in this region.

The Clean Air Act Amendments of 2010 would cut mercury emissions by 90 percent from coal-fired power plants and tighten national limits on emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides.

Gillibrand, a Democrat, is a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. She introduced the legislation along with Sens. Tom Carper (D-Del.) and Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.).

"Future generations depend on us taking aggressive steps to reduce mercury, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide," Gillibrand said in a statement.

"For New Yorkers, this legislation will help reduce air pollution in our communities, decrease acid rain devastating natural resources like the Adirondacks, and begin to address the serious health concerns, such as ever-increasing asthma rates for our children."

According to the American Lung Association, 186 million Americans live in areas where air pollution endangers lives.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the Clean Air Act Amendments would save more than 215,000 lives and more than \$2 trillion in health-care costs by 2025 by cleaning the air, thereby reducing Americans' likelihood of suffering from chronic lung disease, asthma or lung cancer.

The bill has gained support locally.

"We commend Sen. Gillibrand for co-sponsoring this bill in an effort to help the Adirondack Park recover from decades of acid-rain damage," Brian L. Houseal, executive director of the Adirondack Council, said in a release.

"It is vital for the survival of the Adirondack environment and economy that this bill pass as soon as possible."

The bill specifically would require utilities, through the use of emissions-control equipment and other technologies, to cut sulfur-dioxide emissions by 80 percent from 7.6 million tons in 2008 to 1.5 million tons in 2018; cut nitrogen-oxide emissions by 53 percent from 3 million tons in 2008 to 1.6 million tons in 2015; and cut mercury emissions by at least 90 percent no later than 2015.

"Stopping global climate change only gets harder and more costly with every passing day, and I am committed to passage of strong, comprehensive climate and energy legislation as soon as possible," Gillibrand said.

E-mail Joe LoTempio at: jlotempio@pressrepublican.com