



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 20, 2023

Contact: Stephanie Bensadoun
Phone: (617) 722-1555

**SENATOR RAUSCH CELEBRATES EARTH MONTH WITH
LEGISLATION TO DRIVE CLIMATE ACTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

*Legislation necessary to move the Commonwealth toward
its 2030 and 2050 climate goals*

Boston, MA – This Earth Month, Senator Becca Rausch (D-Needham) joins community leaders, activists, and experts to raise awareness about environmental protection work targeted at achieving our Commonwealth’s climate action goals. Earlier this term, Senator Rausch, who serves as the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources, filed several bills to decrease carbon emissions, improve air quality, reduce plastic pollution, and build a more sustainable future for all.

“Climate change is among the greatest challenges of our time, and we must address it immediately and comprehensively,” said Senator Rausch. “The robust climate action we need must enhance our recently enacted legislation by further reducing dangerous carbon emissions, curbing single-use plastics that pollute our environment, restoring air quality, and enhancing environmental justice.”

Single-use plastics such as bags, bottles, and utensils are produced using fossil fuels and have detrimental effects on the environment, marine life, and public health. Moreover, less than 10 percent of existing plastics are recycled. While nearly half the municipalities in the Commonwealth have adopted single-use plastic bag rules, it is estimated that Massachusetts residents use more than [2 billion](#) plastic bags per year and statewide plastic reduction legislation has yet to pass.

An Act to reduce plastics ([S.570](#)), filed by Senator Rausch, seeks to reduce single-use plastics in the Commonwealth by enacting a uniform plastic bag ban, disposable food service ware limits, and a permanent statewide car seat recycling program. The Plastic Reduction Act would also create an Environmental Protection Trust Fund to support environmental justice populations and small businesses in their transition to environmentally friendly products.

As the Plastic Reduction Act expands on the successes of municipalities, this session’s updated Better Buildings Act ([S.2178](#)) builds upon prior successes at the state level secured by Senator Rausch and a broad coalition of environmental experts and activists. With large building energy reporting requirements already enacted into law, this bill would create statewide energy efficiency standards for existing large buildings, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and boosting our ongoing climate action efforts.

Greenhouse gas emissions damage the planet’s ozone layer, leading to negative impacts for human and environmental health. Just last week, the [Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection](#) issued an air quality alert across eastern and northeastern counties in the Commonwealth, asking people with heart or lung disease to reduce prolonged exposure outdoors as they are at greater risk of health complications from increases in ozone levels. Air pollution remains a silent killer in Massachusetts, responsible for an estimated [2,780 deaths](#) in 2019. “Large buildings account for a significant portion of greenhouse gas emissions in Massachusetts. We must use every tool in our toolbox to address the serious

harms of air pollution on residents of the Commonwealth. The Better Buildings Act is necessary climate action legislation to improve energy efficiency, replacing fossil fuel heating with cleaner alternatives,” said Senator Rausch.

Senator Rausch also filed legislation to improve air quality through converting school buses from diesel fuel to electric ([S.2288](#)), and address equity in water quality and access through comprehensive data collection and analysis about water shut offs, tax liens, and unaffordability ([S.2177](#)). Each of these bills address existing issues that disproportionately impact environmental justice communities.

Senator Rausch’s climate legislation takes a multifaceted approach to addressing climate change through an equitable, data-driven lens. These bills now await hearings before their respective legislative committees. For more information on Senator Rausch’s legislative portfolio, visit <https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/RLR0>.

###

First elected in 2018, Senator Becca Rausch represents the Norfolk, Worcester, and Middlesex District, comprised of Bellingham, Dover, Franklin, Medfield, Milford, Millis, Needham, Norfolk, Plainville, Sherborn, and Wrentham.