



Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo

CHARLES ECKERT

Climate bill on the ropes

BY MICHAEL GORMLEY

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ALBANY — A comprehensive bill to combat climate change is on the verge of becoming the first major casualty of the legislative session, according to Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, although several legislators are fighting back.

Cuomo said this week at two events that he doesn't expect the proposed Climate & Community Protection Act to be approved in the final 10 days of the session. He said it is no longer among his priorities for this session.

The bill would set aggressive lower goals to reduce greenhouse gases from motor vehicles and development, and reduce the dependence on fossil fuels by shifting to renewable resources such as wind and solar power, among other actions. The bill is aimed at combating the rising temperatures of climate change that supporters blame for extreme storms and dangerous rises in sea level.

Supporters said legislative action is needed because the damage from climate change is accelerating. "We can all do that within the next nine days," said Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Beach), chairman of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee. "We will not take 'no' for an answer."

Cuomo said his 10 priorities now for passage by the June 19 scheduled end of session include a rent control bill, women's rights issues, ending the statute of limitations on second- and third-degree rape, ending a "gay panic" defense

in connection with assaults on gay victims; and turning his executive order into law that empowers the attorney general to handle police shooting cases.

Democratic legislators pushing the bill are led by Long Islanders: Kaminsky and Assemb. Steven Englebright (D-Setauket), who blame superstorm Sandy on climate change.

The issue could force another confrontation between Cuomo and the new Democratic majority of the Senate. The Assembly and Senate could choose to negotiate a bill between themselves and pass it, but that would risk a veto by Cuomo. The Legislature has never tried to override a Cuomo veto, but this is the first year the Senate has been led by Democratic progressives willing to challenge the governor.

"The issue is the most important and pressing issue in our state and nation and, arguably, in the world," said Englebright, chairman of the Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee.

The June 19 end of session isn't set in law, but decided each year by legislative leaders and has often been exceeded when the Senate or Assembly didn't finish business they wanted to complete.

The Assembly has passed the climate change bill in each of the last three years, but it was stopped by the former Republican majority of the Senate. Kaminsky said all 39 Democrats in the Senate said they support the bill, which would be seven more votes than needed. The bill, however, has made little progress in the Senate.

LI'S D-DAY VETS

Remembering crucial event on 75th anniversary

BY FRANK LOVECE

Special to Newsday

In 1942, Walter Blum co-captained the track team at Great Neck Junior-Senior High School. He dreamed of competing in the 1944 Summer Olympics in London.

Instead, he arrived in England in May of 1944 as a freshly drafted GI. Two weeks later, he found himself scrambling down a cargo net and into a landing craft bound for the coast of France.

On June 6, 1944, at only 18, Blum found himself fighting in the titanic struggle that changed World War II. Historians would call it the longest day, the largest seaborne invasion in history.

As an amphibious engineering team member, Blum was one of the first Americans to arrive at Utah Beach on that early June day 75 years ago. Now, he is one of a dwindling number of Normandy veterans around the world.

"I was just lucky I survived," said Blum.

D-Day ushered forth the pivotal Allied invasion of northwest Europe, forcing an increasingly beleaguered Nazi Germany to defend a western front as the Soviet Union advanced from the east. Although another 11 months of fighting would remain, the successful Allied push foretold the downfall of the Third Reich.

Beginning in the predawn hours of that leaden day, 5,000 ships streamed across the English Channel toward a heavily fortified 50-mile stretch of exposed beaches. They disgorged some 160,000 American, English and Canadian troops.

Many fell to German machine guns that began firing the moment Allied landing craft opened their protective doors. More than a few drowned far from the beach, pulled under by the weight of their gear. Within



Walter Blum in uniform during World War II. Blum was one of the first Americans to arrive at Utah Beach on June 6, 1944.

COURTESY WALTER BLUM