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**STATE LAUNCHES NEW GREEN CLEANING PROGRAM WEBSITE**

*OGS strives to promote a healthy environment for children and facility staff*

New York State Office of General Services (OGS) Commissioner John C. Egan today announced the launch of an innovative New York State Green Cleaning Program website: <https://GreenCleaning.NY.gov> The program, which addresses an issue of national interest, is a component of Governor David A. Paterson's broad sustainability agenda.

This new website provides schools and state agencies with information, resources, and tools to plan and implement a comprehensive green cleaning program customized to their community and site-specific needs. Studies show that when schools adopt green cleaning practices, children's exposure to harmful cleaning chemicals and substances is reduced. Green cleaning, when practiced by more and more school and government facilities, will also make a significant difference for the environment.

"OGS will continue to provide the tools needed so that we may help our schools provide a safe and healthy place for youngsters every day," said OGS Commissioner Egan. "By working with our state agency partners we have built a program that will serve as a model for other states."

The website was created in response to Executive Order 134, which requires all state agencies to use green cleaning products; and the New York State Green Cleaning Law, which mandates the use of environmentally sensitive (green) cleaning products in all New York State's public and non-public elementary and secondary schools. These laws gave OGS the responsibility for adopting green cleaning guidelines and maintaining lists of approved green cleaning products.

New York State Commissioner of Education Richard P. Mills said: "Teaching and learning are enhanced when they take place in a safe and environmentally sound setting. That's why the Education Department is excited to continue working with our partners in State government, as well as our school and community partners, as we improve the school environment for students and educators. By reducing the toxicity of

the chemicals used to clean and maintain school buildings, we can eliminate many health concerns that get in the way of learning.”

The Green Cleaning Program website approaches facility maintenance and cleaning as interrelated with the health of individuals, communities, and the environment. This is reflected in the *Five Steps to a Green Cleaning Program* section of the website that details how to design a successful program. The five steps are: Groundwork; Assessments; Planning; Implementation; and Evaluation. In support of the *Five Steps*, the website features:

- Green Cleaning Best Practices;
- OGS-Approved Green Cleaning Products List;
- Customizable Templates and Documents; and
- Interactive Online Training (coming soon).

In addition, OGS staff worked to establish standards for the procurement of green cleaning products. Some green cleaning products are available now for schools to purchase from OGS centralized procurement contracts, and others will come in the future. More information can be found at: <https://GreenCleaning.ny.gov/Products.asp>.

Commissioner Egan wished to thank the four state agencies that continue to collaborate with OGS on an interagency committee guiding the green cleaning initiative: the Departments of Education, Environmental Conservation, Health, and Labor.

This project is a continuation of OGS' role in embracing sustainability and environmental initiatives and policies that protect the health of citizens and reduce adverse environmental impacts throughout the state. Other recent initiatives include: a food waste composting program in state cafeterias; installation of a 1.5 kilowatt wind turbine on the Empire State Plaza's Corning Tower; development of purchasing specifications for green products; and energy conservation measures that resulted in an 8.12 percent reduction in energy use in fiscal year 2008-09.

As part of New York's commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day, Governor Paterson continues to demonstrate a clear commitment to clean air, clean water, healthy communities, fighting climate change, and promoting renewable energy policies. He is a vocal advocate for clean water investments and “greening” state government. The Governor's specific achievements include New York's historic participation and leadership role in addressing global warming with the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and accomplishing what previous Governors could not by getting the Legislature to finally pass the Bigger, Better, Bottle Bill. By adopting an ambitious but achievable 45 by 15 clean energy goal (45 percent of New York's electricity from renewables and efficiency by 2015), Governor Paterson has set New York on a path to become the global leader in the clean energy economy, creating green jobs, boosting the economy, and protecting the environment.