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GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

State of New York | Executive Chamber
Andrew

GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT TO PREVENT SPREAD OF AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES IN THE ADIRONDACKS

53 Conservation Groups, Owners Associations, Local and State Governments Sign Agreement to Preserve Clean Water, Increase Recreation Opportunities and Promote Tourism

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced an unprecedented [agreement](#) among 53 New York State agencies, municipal governments, property owners, lake associations, conservation groups, sporting groups and businesses to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species in the Adirondack region. The agreement will help preserve clean water, increase recreation opportunities and promote tourism in Upstate New York.

“In addition to being one of our State’s greatest natural treasures, the Adirondacks are a major economic asset for communities across Upstate New York, and today we are taking an important stand to protect the region from the threat of aquatic invasive species,” Governor Cuomo said. “Preventing the spread of these invasive species is crucial to safeguarding the Adirondack waters both today and for the future, and that will ensure that visitors can continue to experience the Park’s natural beauty. Working alongside our dozens of partners, we will help protect the region for years to come.”

A recent study by the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program found that if invasive species are allowed to spread, they could cost the Adirondack economy up to \$900 million. This includes annual losses in visitor spending, and agriculture and primary forest production value as well as losses in property value that will affect the tax base and borrowing ability for property owners on an ongoing basis.

To prevent this, the 53 parties pledge to work together to develop a new region-wide aquatic invasive species prevention pilot program to proactively prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species in Adirondack waters. The program will include stewardship, data collection, education, boat inspections and when necessary, decontamination of boats and trailers. Additional entities can sign onto the agreement going forward.

In his 2015 Opportunity Agenda, Governor Cuomo announced the Protected Landscapes and Thriving Communities initiative to foster the Adirondack’s tourism economy, conserve the Forest Preserve and help communities thrive. A core component of this initiative is preventing the spread of invasive species. To support this effort, the Governor proposed a \$1 million increase to the Environmental Protection Fund in the next fiscal year to fight the spread of invasive species.

The agreement announced today supports the Clean, Drain and Dry standard for all boats entering and exiting the region and its waters. Under the agreement, a regional boat and trailer inspection and decontamination program is planned for 2015 that will build upon the successful efforts undertaken on Lake George and other lakes in the region.

DEC Commissioner Joe Martens said, “Clean waters supporting healthy ecosystems are important to anglers, boaters, paddlers, swimmers and other recreationists who visit the Adirondacks, as well as the

residents whose businesses depend on those visitors. The number and variety of organizations signing this agreement demonstrates the serious threat that aquatic invasive species pose to the ecological and economic health of the Adirondack region and the universal desire to protect water quality, tourism revenues and property values of the region.”

Senator Betty Little said, “The strength of this agreement to keep aquatic invasives out of the Adirondack Park can be found in the diversity of the many groups that have made it a priority. The waters of our lakes, rivers and streams impact the life of everyone who lives in and visits the Adirondack Park. Preserving clean water by preventing the spread of invasives will save millions of dollars and benefit the economy and environment for many, many years. Kudos to Governor Cuomo, Commissioner Martens and all of our local stakeholders for partnering so well.”

William G. Farber, Chairman of the Hamilton County Board of Supervisor, said, “This MOU is another great example of the way the Adirondack Park, has evolved to a new level of cooperation, at the perfect juncture in time. As has become the norm under Governor Cuomo's leadership, an organic grassroots process identifies the issue, and the solution, with the State agencies then stepping up to assist. I commend the Governor and Commissioner Martens, for their help and leadership.”

Brian Towers, president of the Adirondack Association of Towns & Villages, said, “The pristine waters of the Adirondacks are a national treasure that are being endangered by the spread of aquatic invasive species that threaten the very lifeblood of our mountain communities. The Adirondack Association of Towns & Villages applauds the Governor for his vision and support of a prevention program that will monitor and decontaminate boats that carry this threat as they travel from one body of water to another throughout the park. This voluntary program eliminates a regulatory approach to governing boaters while addressing the need for education and prevention, which is an approach all boaters can embrace.”

Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board executive Director Fred Monroe said, “Adirondack local governments appreciate Governor Cuomo’s leadership by proposing \$1 million in his budget for the infrastructure and staff needed to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species, which pose a serious threat to the ecological and economic health of the Adirondack region. The Review Board also recognizes and thanks the diverse coalition of stakeholders, who have been partners and investors in the fight against aquatic invasive species, and who have approved the Memorandum of Understanding committing to protect the vast water resources of the Adirondack Park.”

Adirondack Mountain Club Executive Director and Counsel Neil F. Woodworth said, “This critical agreement between a broad range of stakeholders in the Adirondacks shows the commitment of local and state governments, and the many associations and non-profits that care so deeply for our beautiful Adirondack Park. The Adirondack Mountain Club is looking forward to continuing our stewardship efforts with our many dedicated members and paddlers to achieve the goals of this essential agreement to prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species in the ponds, lakes, streams, and rivers of the Adirondack Park.”

Adirondack Council Deputy Director Diane Fish said, “Invasive species pose a universal threat to the ecological, economic and social fabric of the Adirondack Park. This new agreement will serve as the framework for a new, coordinated strategy for fighting and preventing invasive species in the lakes and rivers of the Adirondack Park. The Governor’s proposal to increase invasive species funding by \$1 million in his 2015-16 budget plan and develop an Adirondack Invasive Species Strategy will provide new opportunities to build prevention and eradication programs in the Park that will serve as a model for the state and the nation.”

Village of Lake George Mayor and Chairman of the S.A.V.E Committee Robert Blais said, “We are

extremely pleased once again to see the support Governor Cuomo has given our fight against the spread of aquatic invasive species in the Adirondack Region. Our 3,000 lakes and ponds 30,000 miles of rivers and streams are our region's most valuable assets. Using our initial success in Lake George as a model and continued leadership of the Governor our S.A.V.E. Group looks forward to working with all our neighbors in the Adirondacks."

Eric Siy, Executive Director of The FUND for Lake George and founding S.A.V.E. Lake George member said, "This historic call to action expresses the unprecedented gravity of the threat posed by invasives and the necessary resolve for preventing them from ruining our precious waters. It is a testament to what it will take to win, leadership at all levels and from all sectors. Just as Governor Cuomo led the way in making the Lake George program a model of national significance, his bold leadership now in creating a prevention program for the entire Adirondack Park will live on as a vital legacy for which future generations will surely be grateful."

Tom Williams, President of Adirondack Landowners Association said, "Water quality is a key to the vital role that tourism and outdoor recreation plays in communities throughout the Adirondack Park. The economic and environmental importance of these waters deserves our best efforts to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species."

Ed Griesmer, Executive Director of the Adirondack Lakes Alliance, said, "The Adirondack Lakes Alliance, representing the interests of lake associations throughout the Adirondack region, commends Governor Cuomo for implementing a strategic plan designed to curb the introduction and spread of invasive species to the nearly 3,000 lakes, streams and ponds in the Adirondack Park. This collaborative plan developed by the state Department of Environmental Conservation and a coalition group of stakeholders including lake associations, municipal governments, state agencies, and conservation groups will have a major impact on economic, environmental, and ecological issues confronting our lakes and communities. Lake associations for years have dedicated thousands of volunteer hours and considerable financial support, as they serve as first responders in addressing the invasive species issue. This commitment will provide additional assistance to lake associations as they continue their primary mission of protecting and preserving our lakes for all to enjoy."

Dr. Eric Holmlund, Interim Dean at Paul Smith's College said, "Paul Smith's College's Adirondack Watershed Institute applauds Governor Cuomo's historic initiative to protect the waters of the Adirondack region from aquatic invasive species. The Adirondack Park AIS Spread Prevention Program provides the Park with an unprecedented set of tools to combat a threat that unites the communities of the park. Invasive species respect no town, county or municipality boundary, and so we need a science-based solution which transcends regional divisions."

Confirmed signatories of the agreement are:

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Adirondack Park Agency

Town of Bolton

Town of Chester

Town of Horicon

Upper Hudson Recreational Hub Towns

- Town of North Hudson
- Town of Newcomb
- Town of Minerva
- Town of Indian Lake
- Town of Long Lake

Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages
Adirondack Council
Adirondack Lakes Alliance
Adirondack Landowners Association
Adirondack Mountain Club
Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board
Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce
Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program
Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve
Ausable River Association
Central Adirondack Partnership for the 21st Century (CAP-21)
Chateaugay Lake Foundation
Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District
East Shore Schroon Lake Association
Friends of Long Pond Association
Fund for Lake George
Hamilton County Board of Supervisors
Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District
Indian Lake Association
Lake Champlain Basin Program
Lake Colby Association
Lake George Association
Lake George Land Conservancy
Lake George Park Commission
Lake Pleasant Sacandaga Association
Lewis County
Long Lake Association
Loon Lake Park District Association
The Nature Conservancy
North Country Chamber of Commerce
Okara Lakes Association in Thendara
Osgood Pond Association
Paul Smith's College
Paradox Lake Association
Piseco Lake Association
Protect the Adirondacks
Raquette Lake Association
Schroon Lake Association
Upper Saranac Lake Association
Village of Lake George
Warren County Invasive Species Committee
Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District
Wildlife Conservation Society

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