



PRESS RELEASE

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PROTECT Calls upon Governor Cuomo and DEC to Adopt 5-Point Aquatic Invasive Species Control Plan

5 Point Plan centers on new statewide AIS transport law and mandatory boat inspection and decontamination facilities network

5 Point Plan also calls for New York to adopt boat registration surcharge to fund control programs, similar to programs in effect in many other states

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Lake George, NY – New York State lags significantly behind many other states in the U.S. for control and management of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Over the last few years, New York has lost ground in the campaign to stop the spread of AIS. Bold measures are needed by the Cuomo Administration and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to combat AIS and protect New York’s waters.

In the past three years in the Adirondack Park spiny water flea has infested Lake George and the Great Sacandaga Lake, Asian clams have infested Lake George, and variable-milfoil has infested Lake Durant and Lake Placid, to name just a few infestations.

Protect the Adirondacks urges the Cuomo Administration and DEC to embrace a 5-Point Plan to significantly improve New York’s ability and effectiveness to prevent the spread of AIS. All of these measures have been successfully implemented in other states and have proven highly effective.

“Upstate New York is often cited as an economically depressed area, yet it is an area rich in incredible lakes, ponds and rivers. The water quality of Upstate New York is vital to the local economies and supports a number of businesses, resorts, vacation homes, and high property values. AIS can rapidly change the ecology of a lake, wetland, pond or river as well as significantly impair and seriously diminish recreational enjoyment. The Cuomo Administration and DEC need to make a much greater investment in combatting AIS in order to protect the Upstate economy, environment and quality of life,” said Chuck Clusen, Chair of Protect the Adirondacks.

“As more lakes become infested with AIS, the costs of control efforts rise. AIS control is very expensive, often beyond the means on lake associations, local governments and limited funding from the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). Prevention and interdiction are far less expensive and will do much more to control the spread of AIS than the combined control and management efforts underway across New York,” said Peter Bauer, Executive Director.

5 Point Plan for Aquatic Invasive Species Control

It is time for New York to enact a package of programs to give law enforcement agencies, municipalities, and private organizations new critical tools to stop the spread of AIS. The state acted to stop the sale of invasive species in 2012 and this was an important step. Now, New York needs to adopt a new handful of measures that have been proven effective and have been successfully utilized in other states.

1. Legislation that criminalizes the transport of AIS and fully empowers state and local law enforcement at every level to enforce this law. Fines must be serious. New York needs an AIS “transport law.” Such laws are in effect in Vermont, Washington, Montana, Idaho, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Minnesota, among others. Various counties in New York, such as Warren County, have enacted transport laws. One comprehensive law for New York would be better than various county and town laws throughout the state.
2. New York must help to build a comprehensive statewide inspection and decontamination infrastructure. Many willing partners exist across New York with lake associations, private organizations, and local governments.
3. Adequate, sustained funding is badly needed for AIS management. Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) funding at \$4.6 million annually is inadequate to meet the need for interdiction and prevention as well as management. A new dedicated funding source is needed. Successful management and prevention programs need to be funded and operated annually so that there are no gaps in service, which allows AIS to rebound or be re-introduced/introduced. Other states, such as Oregon, Idaho, Minnesota, Wyoming, and Maine, among others, have successfully implemented AIS surcharges to boat registrations and dedicated these funds to AIS control. New York had 460,000 registered boats in 2012.
4. A launch law is important. This is legislation that criminalizes the launching of an uninspected or infested boat into a water body by a boat owner as well as by the boat launch operator.
5. NYS must organize a registry of infested and non-infested waterways and continuously update this database. Many states currently do this. Minnesota maintains an excellent database. Other states do this too.

“PROTECT’s 5 Point Plan would significantly improve New York’s ability to manage aquatic invasive species and protect New York’s waters. These measures will be widely embraced by lake associations, many organizations that work on invasive species control, and local governments. The lakes and ponds are the biggest economic assets of many rural

communities throughout New York and we need the state to make an investment in protecting these critical assets for the long-term,” said Peter Bauer.

Protect the Adirondacks

Protect the Adirondacks is a privately funded, IRS-approved not-for-profit organization dedicated to the protection of the 6-million-acre Adirondack Park in northern New York. PROTECT was formed through the merger of the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks and the Residents’ Committee to Protect the Adirondacks in 2009. PROTECT pursues its mission to protect the Adirondack Park and defend the public “forever wild” Forest Preserve through citizen advocacy, grassroots organizing, education, research, and legal action. PROTECT is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. PROTECT maintains an office in Lake George. For more information see www.protectadks.org.

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