



## Memorandum of Support

### **S. 7273/A. 9619 “AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to aquatic invasive species, spread prevention, and penalties”**

This legislation aims to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) by requiring the removal of visible vegetation and animals from boats and related gear, as well as draining areas of the watercraft of all water, when entering and leaving boat launch sites to various water bodies across New York. Laws that prohibit the transport of AIS are common throughout the U.S. Many states such as Minnesota, Vermont, New Hampshire, Washington, Idaho, Montana, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, Massachusetts, and South Carolina, among others, have similar laws.

S. 7273/A. 9619 prohibits the launching of boats that have any visible plant and animal matter on any surface of the boat or trailer, or contains any standing water, at any public or private boat launch into any water body in New York. Boats should be clean, drained and dry.

New York State lags significantly behind many other states in the U.S. for AIS control and management. Over the last few years, New York has lost ground in the campaign to stop the spread of AIS. Direct control of AIS in various water bodies is very expensive. New York now needs to expand its focus on prevention and interdiction. This legislation will help to expand prevention and interdiction programs across New York.

### **Motorboats spread AIS: the time is now for bold action to stop the spread of AIS**

The main vector for spreading AIS throughout the Adirondacks and New York is the transport of motorboats for public recreation. 460,000 motorboats were registered in New York in 2012. Tens of thousands of boats are transported across New York for public recreation for use on many lakes, ponds, and rivers. AIS plants and animals attach to boat engines, hulls, and trailers, among other places, and are carried from one lake to another. In juvenile stages, microscopic AIS animals, such as Asian clams (*Corbicula fluminea*), quagga mussels (*Dreissena bugensis*) and spiny water flea (*Bythotrephes longimanus*), are transported in standing ballast waters, engine water and in live wells and bait buckets.

Lake George and Lake Champlain were the first lakes infested with Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) and curly leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*) in the 1980s. Their high popularity and high boat traffic, combined with the weak control efforts, resulted in spreading Eurasian watermilfoil throughout the Adirondacks and New York. Management costs since then have cost tens of millions of dollars statewide.

This same dynamic is at play once again, though the species have changed. The Asian clam and spiny water flea infestations in Lake George raises the likelihood that these invasive species will be transported from Lake George to other lakes and ponds throughout the Adirondacks. In Lake Tahoe, the Asian clam infestation has resulted in transforming once blue and sandy beaches into places littered with clam shells and often covered with thick wads of algae. We cannot let this happen in New York.

The time for action is now. Upstate New York is often cited as an economically depressed area. Yet Upstate 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. A much greater investment is needed by New York State to prevent the spread of AIS in order to protect the Upstate economy, environment and quality of life.

Comprehensive statewide action, with a focused effort of prevention and interdiction, is vital today because in New York we still have places like the Adirondack Park, and other areas of Upstate New York, where the majority of the major lakes remain free of AIS. Unlike most of the rest of New York, most of the major lakes and ponds in the Adirondacks remain free of AIS, but the numbers of infested lakes continues to grow.

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.

The recent costs of unsuccessful control efforts on Lake George for the Asian clam (*Corbicula fluminea*) and for hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) on Cayuga Lake show the high costs of control efforts. Over \$4 million has been spent to control Asian clams on Lake George and over \$1 million to control hydrilla in Cayuga Lake. Given this reality, New York needs to significantly improve its AIS prevention and interdiction infrastructure.

Many non-profits, local governments, and academic institutions, among others, have organized programs where Lake Stewards provide public information about the threats and hazards of AIS at boat launches. Protect the Adirondacks is one of many organizations that manage such programs. The people and organizations on the front lines of AIS education believe that a new law that prohibits the launching of any boat that is not clean, drained and dry is badly needed and will help statewide efforts to control AIS. It is time to place greater emphasis on prevention and interdiction of AIS.

The days of dirty boating must end. The protection of lakes, ponds, and rivers from AIS infestation will help the economy and quality of life of Upstate New York communities.

**Protect the Adirondacks urges the passage of Senate Bill 7273/Assembly Bill 9619.**

**For more information:**

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