



PRESS RELEASE

September 2, 2014

PROTECT cheers Governor Cuomo's Signing of Aquatic Invasive Species Transport Bill

New bill will see new statewide regulations to ban the transport of invasive species at public, private and commercial boat launches across New York

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Lake George, NY – Protect the Adirondacks applauds today's bill signing by Governor Andrew Cuomo of legislation to ban the transport of aquatic invasive species (AIS) at public, private and commercial boat launches around New York. This legislation was sponsored by Barbara Lifton (D-Ithaca) in the Assembly and Senator Thomas O'Mara (R- Chemung County) and is titled "An act to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to aquatic invasive species, spread prevention, and penalties" (S. 7851-B O'Mara/A. 9619-B Lifton).

The Lifton-O'Mara legislation aims to prevent the spread of 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.

"This is important statewide legislation that marks a new focus on intervention and prevention of aquatic invasive species. It's very difficult to get rid of an invasive species once it's established in a lake or pond. This new law, which will be followed by statewide regulations, will shift the spotlight to prevention. In the Adirondack Park and across New York we still have many lakes that are not yet infested with invasive species. This law will help to keep these lakes free and clean," said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

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 attaches to the 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.

“Upstate New York 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,” said Peter Bauer.

A broad coalition supported this legislation including the region’s and state’s leading environmental groups, Trout Unlimited, the Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board, New York State Federation of Lake Associations, and many individual lake associations in the Adirondacks and across New York.

The Department of Environmental Conservation passed rules to ban launching of boats with AIS at over 200 public boat launches and fishing access sites in New York. This legislation covers public, private and commercial launches. It creates the state’s first comprehensive intervention and prevention program.

The Lifton-O’Mara legislation creates a strong new state regulatory infrastructure. Once this bill is signed into law, and after regulations are finalized, New York will need to develop hundreds of decontamination facilities and make sure that the major boat launches across the state have inspectors. It’s time to muster a greater sustained investment in the protection of water quality across Upstate New York.

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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