



PRESS RELEASE

June 8, 2020

## **Cuomo Administration Nominates Four New APA Board Members, and Seeks New Terms for Three Others**

*Slate nominated locks in control of the APA by the Cuomo Administration*

### **For more information:**

Peter Bauer, Executive Director: Office 518-251-2700, Cell 518-796-0112

North Creek, NY – The Cuomo Administration today formally nominated seven individuals to the Adirondack Park Agency Board. Three individuals who are currently serving were nominated for new terms and four individuals were nominated for their first terms.

Nominated for their first terms as APA Board members are Andrea Hogan (D-Warren County), who is currently the Supervisor of the Town of Johnsburg; Mark Hall (R-St. Lawrence County), former Town Supervisor of the Town of Fine; Zoe Smith (D-Franklin County), assistant director of the Paul Smith's College Adirondack Watershed Institute; Kenneth Lynch (R-Onondaga County), retired attorney with the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Three members currently serving and nominated for new terms include Art Lussi (D-Essex County), hotel owner and developer; Daniel Wilt (R-Hamilton County), local government official, business owner; John Ernst (D-New York County), business owner, philanthropist.

One APA Board Member, Dr. Chad Dawson (D-Onondaga County), a retired professor at SUNY-ESF, is currently serving in a current term.

The APA Board includes 8 citizen members, five that must reside within the Adirondack Park and three from parts of New York outside the Park. There are three Board members who represent state agencies, including the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Department of State, and Empire State Development Corp. No more than five members can be from one political party. Board members from within the Adirondack Park must reside in different counties.

“The minority of independent voices among the slate submitted by the Governor to the State Senate for the APA Board will ensure that the APA remains a weak and directionless agency, committed to undermining Forest Preserve protections, and holding economic development as its primary priority,” said Peter Bauer, executive director.

“This group of nominees to the APA fails to change the leadership or direction of the APA. These appointments will continue the Cuomo Administration’s monopoly on power and micro-managing of the APA. The agency will continue to function as a bureau within the DEC and not as a full-fledged independent agency with serious checks-and-balances authority over public lands. The APA Act calls for Board members to be independent, but the majority of Board members are Team Cuomo acolytes, which short-changes effective public policy for the public and private lands in the Adirondack Park,” said Peter Bauer.

“The Adirondack Park needs an independent environmental attorney. Ken Lynch is a former DEC staff attorney who will continue to function as a DEC attorney at the APA, in effect giving the DEC two votes on the Board. He was a Team Cuomo cheerleader during his time at the DEC and we have zero confidence that he will function as an independent voice for Adirondack issues,” said Peter Bauer.

Protect the Adirondacks is disappointed that Art Lussi and Daniel Wilt have been nominated for new terms as APA Board members. Each has strongly support the weakening, the first in the history of the APA, of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan ordered by the Cuomo Administration. Each has supported the biggest expansion of motor vehicle access in the history of the Forest Preserve. Each has strongly supported building a network of road-like Class II Community Connector Snowmobile Trails in the Forest Preserve, which were found unconstitutional due to the level of tree cutting required by the Appellate Division, Third Department (the state is appealing). Each has blindly supported any and all private land development projects. Lussi is also a member of the Olympic Regional Development Authority, a clear conflict of interest with the APA.

### **Protect the Adirondacks**

Protect the Adirondacks is an IRS-approved non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and stewardship of the 6-million-acre Adirondack Park. Our mission is to protect the Adirondack Park’s wild character for current and future generations. PROTECT pursues this mission through a combination of advocacy, grassroots organizing, independent public oversight, research, education, and legal action. Protect the Adirondacks was formed in 2009 as a result of a merger between two long-standing environmental conservation groups in the Park, The Resident’s Committee to Protect the Adirondacks and the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks. Protect the Adirondacks is managed by a 21-member Board of Directors of Adirondack leaders in state agency management, environmental law, local government, Adirondack environmental and cultural history, and small business. Protect the Adirondacks maintains an office in a 100% energy efficient, solar- and wind-powered office in Johnsbury in the central Adirondacks. For more information see [www.protectadks.org](http://www.protectadks.org) and @ProtectAdkPark.

##