



PRESS RELEASE

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Budgets Released by the Legislature Restore Funding for Adirondack Park Initiatives

The Senate and Assembly have proposed budgets that will restore funding for critical programs in the Adirondack Park, adds potential funding for road salt management, but leaves out funding for the carrying capacity study required for the Saranac Chain of Lakes.

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Protect the Adirondacks, Inc. (PROTECT) applauds funding proposed for the FY2025 Budgets released by the State Senate and State Assembly. The proposed budgets provide significant funding for Adirondack programs that were reduced or eliminated from the Governor Kathy Hochul's proposed budget.

The Legislature has restored the Clean Water Fund to \$500 million. The Assembly's budget proposal specifies \$10 million from the Clean Water Fund for proper management of road salt. "Protect the Adirondacks supports the Assembly's budget allocation of \$10 million to implement the road salt reduction strategies in the 2023 Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force report documenting the significant adverse groundwater and surface water pollution effects of the use of road salt in the Adirondack Park. We urge the State Senate to support this budget line item too," said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

The Environmental Protection Fund ("EPF"), the main source of funding for stewardship of public lands within the Adirondack Park and for the environmentally sound economic development of communities in the Park, remains stable at \$400 million for FY2025. PROTECT is pleased to see that the Legislature removed the \$25 million line item that the Governor had included for personnel services. Agency staff costs should not be paid for out of the EPF.

Both the Senate and the Assembly proposals increase the amount of funding for Open Space and Land Acquisition over what was proposed by the Governor. The Legislature

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has included the Governor's proposal of \$4.5 million of funding for land trusts to protect lands across the State. The Legislature must increase acquisition funding to \$50 million or more to put the State on track to achieve its goal of protecting 30% of the State's lands and inland waters by 2030.

"The Senate's proposal raises the State Land Stewardship line of the EPF to a little more than \$50 million, including \$8 million for the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. The Assembly's proposal decreased the Stewardship line overall, but increased to \$10 million the allocation for the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. Both houses included \$1 million of funding to sustain the visitor centers in the Parks. However, the Legislature needs to include an additional suballocation of \$1 million out of the State Land Stewardship line, so that the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) can conduct a carrying capacity study for the Saranac Chain of Lakes before adverse impacts occur to these waterbodies as a result of increased visitor usage and new private development projects being reviewed by the Adirondack Park Agency," said Claudia Braymer, Deputy Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

The Senate's proposal includes \$200,000 of critical funding for the Adirondack Watershed Institute at Paul Smith's College that conducts water quality monitoring and invasive species management throughout the Adirondack Park. Protect the Adirondacks urges the State Assembly to also support the Adirondack Watershed Institute at \$200,000 to help protect clean water in the Adirondack Park.

The Legislature included \$2 million of funding for the Survey of Climate Change and Adirondack Lake Ecosystems (SCALE) study. Both houses included \$1.5 million of funding for the Adirondack Loj Road resurfacing project. Both houses also included \$500,000 of funding for Cornell's New York State Hemlock Initiative to control hemlock wooly adelgid. Additionally, the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center at the Whiteface Mountain field station was funded to the tune of \$100,000.

PROTECT is pleased to see that the Legislature restored \$2.1 million of funding for the Timbuctoo Summer Climate and Careers Institute that had been slashed from the Governor's budget. The Legislature has also included funding for the Adirondack North Country Association's Adirondack Diversity Initiative. However, the Legislature did not include money for the "African American Experience in the Adirondacks" exhibit at the Adirondack Experience in Blue Mountain Lake. "We're disappointed that the Legislature did not include funding for the new innovative exhibit at the Adirondack Experience that will help to make the Adirondacks a welcoming and inclusive place for both residents and visitors," said Peter Bauer.

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, water quality monitoring, education,

and legal action. Protect the Adirondacks was formed in 2009 as the result of a merger between two long-standing environmental conservation groups in the Adirondack Park, the Resident's Committee to Protect the Adirondacks (est. 1991) and the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks (est. 1901).

Protect the Adirondacks is managed by a 22-member Board of Directors of Adirondack leaders with expertise in environmental law, local government, Adirondack environmental and cultural history, state agency management, 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 and @ProtectAdkPark.

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