



PRESS RELEASE

March 11, 2026

One House Budgets Boost Funding for Adirondack Park Programs

The Senate and Assembly have each proposed one-house budgets that provide funding for critical programs in the Adirondack Park.

For more information, call Protect the Adirondacks:

Claudia Braymer, Executive Director: Cell 703.937.7163

Christopher Amato, Conservation Director and Counsel: Cell 518.860.3696

Protect the Adirondacks, Inc. (PROTECT) applauds the New York State Senate and Assembly for proposing strong funding for the Adirondack Park in their FY2027 one-house budgets. Both proposals increase the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and restore and/or enhance support for several Adirondack programs that were reduced or eliminated from the Governor Kathy Hochul's proposed budget.

Both houses of the State Legislature propose increasing the EPF to \$500 million for FY2027. If adopted, this would represent a historic level of funding for environmental initiatives across New York State. Robust EPF funding is essential to maintaining and enhancing the State's environmental quality.

The Senate and the Assembly proposals also increase funding for Open Space and Land Acquisition (\$44 million and \$53 million, respectively) above the \$42 million proposed by the Governor. This funding is important for protecting the State's lands and waters, including acquiring lands in the Adirondack Park to add to the Forest Preserve. Additionally, the Senate proposal includes \$12 million for Adirondack and Catskill visitor safety and wilderness protection.

"We commend the Legislature for once again proposing to increase the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) to \$500 million. This funding will support critical land protection and acquisition projects across the State, including in the Adirondacks. The Senate's proposal to allocate \$12 million in the EPF for Adirondack and Catskill visitor safety and wilderness protection provides much-needed resources to address the growing impacts of overuse on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks," said Claudia Braymer, Executive Director of PROTECT.

Protect the Adirondacks!

PO Box 48, North Creek, NY 12853 (518) 251-2700

info@protectadks.org www.protectadks.org

Like Us on Facebook Follow Us on Instagram/Threads @ProtectAdkPark

“Additionally, we support the Senate's proposal to provide \$2.1 million for the Timbuctoo Institute to continue its program of bringing high school students from New York City to the Adirondacks to learn about academic and professional opportunities in a range of careers related to climate, the green economy, and natural resources protection,” continued Braymer.

The Senate, Assembly, and Governor Hochul have each also included \$1 million for the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to conduct a carrying capacity study of the heavily used Saranac Chain of Lakes. Although \$1 million for this study was included in last year's State budget, the funds were not expended by DEC during the fiscal year.

“We are pleased that the Legislature and the Governor have included \$1 million for DEC to conduct a carrying capacity study of the Saranac Chain of Lakes. This study, required by the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan, will provide DEC with the data needed to protect these water bodies from further adverse impacts resulting from increasing recreational use and pressure from private development projects,” said Christopher Amato, Conservation Director and Counsel for PROTECT. “We urge DEC to take advantage of these funds to ensure that this important study is undertaken and used to support the proper management of the Saranac Chain of Lakes,” Amato added.

Both the Senate and Assembly included \$200,000 for the Adirondack Watershed Institute at Paul Smith's College, which conducts water quality monitoring and invasive species management throughout the Adirondack Park, as well as \$200,000 for the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center at Whiteface Mountain Field Station. The Governor's proposal did not include funding for either of these critical research programs.

The Legislature is also proposing \$1 million for the four visitor centers in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks, and \$2 million for Survey of Climate Change and Adirondack Lake Ecosystems (SCALE) study. The Senate proposed \$2.1 million for the Timbuctoo Institute, while the Assembly proposed \$1.25 million for that program. Additionally, the Senate proposed \$420,000 for the Adirondack Diversity Initiative, compared to \$300,000 in the Assembly proposal.

PROTECT thanks Senate Majority Leader Andrew Stewart-Cousins, Senate Finance Chair Liz Krueger, Senate Environmental Conservation Chair Pete Harckham, Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie, Assembly Ways and Means Committee Chair J. Gary Pretlow, and Assembly Environmental Conservation Chair Deborah Glick for their outstanding leadership in ensuring funding of crucial Adirondack Park programs.

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 21-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 Johnsburg in the central Adirondacks. For more information see www.protectadks.org and @ProtectAdkPark.

##