



Feb 19, 2019

Hon. Brad Hoylman and Hon. Steven Englebright, Sponsors
Climate and Community Protection Act
NYS Legislature
Albany, NY 12247

Re. Climate and Community Protection Act, S. 7971 - A. 10342

Dear Senator Hoylman, Assemblyman Englebright and colleagues,

Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve applauds efforts in the NYS Senate and NYS Assembly to create a Climate Action Council and to approve measurable standards and indices that can help achieve the State's and Governor Cuomo's goal of a carbon neutral economy by 2050.

The Adirondack Park is a treasured, irreplaceable wilderness and a natural, protected ecosystem highly vulnerable to ongoing and accelerating impacts of climate change. It is also a disadvantaged, rural area with many small, low income communities scattered across a very large area, one-fifth of New York State. These communities confront intense fluctuations in precipitation, including flooding of area rivers and streams and loss of winter snow and ice. Recovery from these intense events is difficult. Durable snowpack and lake ice has declined by at least 30 days over the past half century and will continue to decrease, which has repercussions for the area's ecology, culture and tourism-based economies.

We ask that the scope and content of the legislation take into account rapidly changing conditions in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks, including but not limited to the following:

- **Carbon sequestration and storage:** There is significant potential to incentivize more annual carbon sequestration and long-term storage in the Parks' large, contiguous temperate deciduous forests protected as "forever wild" public forest preserve and as private and town forests conserved by conservation easement. Incentives to increase carbon storage and accelerate forest practices which encourage carbon sequestration and storage should be considered for inclusion in your legislation;

- **Integrated data collection and analysis:** Long-term, well-coordinated climate research and monitoring should inform policy. While there is much climate-related data collected in the Adirondacks, there is little to no aggregation, integration and coordination of the data and its analysis. Given that the State Legislature has assigned long-term planning for the six-million acre Adirondack Park to the NYS Adirondack Park Agency, the APA should be tasked, funded and staffed appropriately to become the place where climate data across the region is aggregated and where indicators of climate change across the region are detected, tracked, analyzed, reported and utilized by the Governor, State Legislature and local governments;
- **Resilient communities:** Park local governments should be given resources to better plan their future community's development to become more resilient to climate-related impacts, such as planning where and how development is designed and located and how the area's rivers, streams, wetlands and highway culverts can help to attenuate or lessen flooding impacts downstream and on main streets. Many streams were channelized after Hurricane Irene and these stream channels need to be restored so that they can again re-connect to their floodplains, tamp down flood energy, and not act as sluiceways to transmit harmful flood energy downstream;
- **Public Health:** Climate trends have now brought new health threats to these mountain regions of the state, including the rapid spread of ticks and tick-related illness such as Lyme. Much of the area's scientific research into these public health trends relies upon resources made available from the Tick-Born Disease Task Force. Please maintain strong support for the Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease in the legislation;
- **Climate and State Lands:** The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation regularly completes and updates State Land Unit Management Plans ("UMP") affecting three million acres in the aggregate, yet few of these plans adequately factor in climate-related trends. The legislation should explicitly task the DEC with responsibility for assuring that climate related data, trends and assessments are factored into each UMP's recommendations for managing recreational activity and ecological resiliency on the Forest Preserve in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. In particular, these UMPs should assess the loss of winter lake ice and snowpack on area recreational planning and management.

Again, thank you for the bill's introduction and promise to help address climate change and climate related impacts across the State of New York and, in particular, in the great forested, rural regions comprising the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. Thank you for considering our suggestions for the legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Gibson".

David Gibson, Managing Partner
Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve

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cc: Hon. Andrea Stewart- Cousins, Senate Majority Leader
Hon. Carl Heastie, Assembly Speaker
Hon. Todd Kaminsky, Chair, Senate Environmental Conservation Committee
Dale Bryk, Deputy Secretary for the Environment
Evan Preminger, Assistant Secretary for the Environment
Karen Feldman, Acting Chair, NYS APA
Basil Seggos, Commissioner, NYS DEC