



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Latimer

Latimer Bill would Trump Federal Gutting of Wetland Protection Laws in New York

GEORGE LATIMER March 14, 2017

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Seeking to address proposed changes in federal law that will weaken protection for New York's wetlands, State Senator George Latimer (D-Westchester) has introduced legislation that will give New York State greater authority in identifying and protecting wetland areas throughout the state. With the new Administration in Washington looking to reduce the federal government's role in environmental protection, specifically seeking to reduce or eliminate many of the clean water protection laws and rules, protection of our waterways and wetlands will fall to New York State.

"This legislation will allow New York to play a greater role in identifying wetland areas, an important part of watershed and habitats, and give state authorities the protection role that we anticipate the federal government is about to abdicate," Senator Latimer said.

The Latimer bill (S.1749) is sponsored in the Assembly by Environmental Conservation Committee Chair Steve Englebright (A.6282). The bill would allow the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to protect smaller wetlands, as small as one acre. Current law provides state wetlands protections for those that are 12.4 acres and larger, and those found to be of "unusual local importance" by the Commissioner of DEC. The

proposed legislation would make wetlands one acre or larger subject to regulation and include smaller wetlands that are adjacent to water bodies, or those that are deemed to be of “significant local importance”.

The bill would also update the state’s Wetlands Maps, most of which are more than 20 years old and do not reflect how development has affected New York’s Wetlands.

Senator Latimer added, “The mantra out of Washington has been ‘Drain the Swamp’. Apparently they want to drain the Wetlands, too. We in New York cannot allow that to happen.”

Liz Moran, water & natural resources associate at Environmental Advocates of New York said, “We’re less than two months into the Trump Administration, and it’s already clear that to protect our waters, states have to lead. Wetlands are a natural filter for pollutants, and for many communities, the only natural barrier in times of flood, not to mention secure habitat for wildlife. Existing law is outdated and inconsistent. We applaud for Senator Latimer for this great legislation, and for stepping up to protect water quality for all New Yorkers.”

“The Trump administration’s roll back of the nation’s clean water protections and evisceration of the environmental agencies that enforce those laws should embolden New York lawmakers to fill the void in leadership”, said Roger Downs, Conservation Director, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter. “We stand with Senator George Lattimer in advancing critical legislation that ensures our rivers and wetlands do not succumb to unnecessary pollution and destruction, which in turn protects our drinking water, prevents flooding and supports critical ecosystems”

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S1749

- Introduced
 - ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
 - ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
 - ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
 - Delivered to Governor
 - Signed By Governor
 -

Relates to freshwater wetlands and repeals section 24-1305 relating thereto
January 10, 2017

In Senate Committee [Environmental Conservation](#)

Sponsored by [George Latimer](#)

Do you support this bill?