



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rachel May

## Senator Rachel May and Assemblymember Anna Kelles Announce New Legislation to Combat Harmful Algal Blooms in New York Waters

DAN MESSINEO February 6, 2024

| ISSUE: **HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS (HABS), WATER QUALITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER**



Senator Rachel May (D-48th District) and Assemblymember Anna Kelles (D-125th District) come together to protect the environment and New York's precious freshwater resources with the Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring and Prevention (HABMAP) Act (A8867/S8356). The bill will provide the state with a critical clearing house of data and strategic information related to harmful algal blooms (HABs), ensuring the health of residents and waters of New

York .

While HABS were once rare in the state, they have recently appeared in reservoirs, lakes, ponds, and coastal areas. In 2022, the DEC reported 1,053 HABS in 204 water bodies across the state, which likely understates the problem due to underreporting. HABS impede bodies of water for many purposes like recreation and industry, but most importantly, as sources of drinking water. New York has been one of the more proactive states in monitoring HABS on specific water bodies, but concerns remain that a comprehensive and coordinated State strategy is needed to monitor, identify causes, and take steps to more effectively prevent and mitigate HABS.

For the first time in New York, the HABMAP Act will create a centralized resource for reporting and dealing with HABS, including potential and known causes, best practice interventions, expertise, and funding resources. The data and subsequent report will enable the state to effectively and efficiently administer a grant program supporting data-driven best practices in preventing and mitigating harmful algal blooms.

“Our state's freshwater resources are the envy of the world, but they are increasingly vulnerable to pollution and the effects of a warming climate. Every season, toxic algal blooms plague many New York lakes, causing a potentially dangerous situation for residents who depend on lakes for drinking water or use them for recreation,” **said Senator Rachel May** (D-Onondaga, Cayuga). “The HABMAP Act will help state and local governments understand, identify, and manage threats to our water while maintaining the high quality of life that residents, employers, recreational boaters, fishing enthusiasts, and tourists from around the world have come to expect.”

**Assemblymember Anna Kelles stated** “Last summer, we saw the alarming rate at which Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) were affecting recreation, wildlife, and drinking water in Cayuga Lake and across the Finger Lakes Region and the State. This bill provides a clear mechanism to understand the causes of HAB’s and start improving our water quality, enhancing recreation, wildlife habitat, and limiting harmful algal blooms. If enacted, New York will be at the forefront of producing data that can be used to offer new insights for agencies, local governments, residents, and more, to reduce polluting runoff into our lakes.”

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### 2023-S8356

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- 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

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Enacts the "harmful algal bloom monitoring and prevention act"

January 22, 2024

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Rachel May

Do you support this bill?