



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

NY DEC Announces Plans to Modify Baitfish Transport Regulations

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Revised Rules Will Address Overland Transport Restrictions

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Acting Commissioner Joe Martens today announced that DEC will propose revisions to the current rule restricting overland transport of uncertified baitfish.

“I appreciate the helpful criticism of the Department’s existing baitfish regulations and we are revising the rule accordingly,” said Acting Commissioner Joe Martens. “Fishing is an important part of our outdoor sports economy, and we expect anglers will welcome this change and support our common goal of protecting New York’s world class fisheries.”

DEC is currently developing a proposed revision to the regulations that would allow baitfish to be transported overland within defined “transportation corridors” for use within the same waterbody from which they are collected. DEC anticipates issuing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in March to be followed by a 45-day public comment period.

The current baitfish regulations contain prohibitions on the overland motorized transport of baitfish, including personally collected baitfish and baitfish collected for commercial sale. The rule was established in 2007 after an outbreak of viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS), a disease that can cause internal bleeding and death in certain fish, in the Great Lakes system and several other waters in 2005 and 2006. While VHS was the primary concern, other serious fish pathogens were also addressed when the rule was established.

Since the regulation was established, anglers have voiced concern that the overland transport restriction impedes their ability to use personally collected baitfish on the same body of water from which the baitfish are collected. In response to these concerns, DEC solicited public input on several alternatives for revisions to the rule at a number of public meetings and through the submission of written comments during the summer of 2010. These comments will be taken into consideration in the upcoming proposal.

“I applaud DEC for taking a common sense approach to an issue that has been especially harmful to the residents of Western New York,” said Senator Mark Grisanti, Chair of the Senate Committee of Environmental Conservation, “I am pleased to see such a positive outcome and look forward to working with Commissioner Martens to resolve issues affecting all New Yorkers in the future.”

Additional background information regarding the current [overland transport regulation](#) is available on DEC’s website.