



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Hugh T. Farley

## Senate Gives Approval to Bill That Protects New York's Water Resources

HUGH T. FARLEY June 17, 2011

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State Senator Hugh T. Farley (r, C, I - Schenectady) announced that he and his colleagues in the New York State Senate passed a bill on June 16th protecting New York's environmental and economic future by improving management of water supplies and preventing over-consumption by large-scale users. The bill (S.3798) ensures that water supplies will be protected to meet the needs of New York's residents, industry, agriculture and environment now and into the future.

New York State is fortunate to have plentiful water resources. The preservation and protection of these resources is vital to New York's residents and businesses, who rely on these resources for drinking water supplies, and to support agriculture, manufacturing and other industries and recreation in the state. Aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals are also dependent on these critical resources to maintain healthy populations and it is critical to protect water supplies to meet New York's long-term needs.

Currently, the state's authority to protect water withdrawals is largely limited to public water supplies to ensure adequate quantities of potable water. As a result, consumptive uses of water for agricultural, commercial, and industrial purposes remain largely unregulated by

the state.

The bill enables the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to implement a permitting program for all water withdrawal systems with a capacity equal to or greater than 100,000 gallons per day. Applicable large-scale consumers could continue to obtain the water they need in a way that is protective of the overall quantity and quality of the water supply. The measure also relieves a regulatory burden for municipalities and some industry by removing the current permit issued for smaller water withdrawals. This focuses state monitoring on the water withdrawal projects that are most likely to have a significant impact on the state's water resources.

Connecticut, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts all have programs that regulate industrial, commercial and agricultural water withdrawals. In addition, the adoption of this legislation would implement key provisions of the [Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact](#), of which New York is a member. The Great Lakes basin, which comprises 50 percent of New York by area, contains freshwater resources that are under ongoing development pressure and increasing water supply demand.

The bill will be sent to the Governor.