



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Senator Nozzolio Demands Equal Watershed Protections for All Finger Lakes

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO August 12, 2011

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State Senator Michael Nozzolio is continuing his efforts to urge the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to establish equal watershed protections for all the lakes in the Finger Lakes region. Senator Nozzolio strongly criticized the DEC's recent draft Environmental Impact Statement on natural gas drilling, which recommends stricter environmental protection regulations in the regions surrounding Skaneateles Lake and the New York City watershed, while not providing the same protections for the watersheds of the other Finger Lakes.

“The Finger Lakes provide the source of fresh drinking water to millions of residents, as well as supporting our tourism and recreational industry and hundreds of local businesses, farms, wineries, and vineyards. Stricter regulations for just two watersheds appears to totally disregard the numerous communities that depend on the rest of the Finger Lakes for clean water,” said Senator Nozzolio. “It makes no sense why the DEC would single out one Finger Lake for certain environmental protections but not the others.”

In a letter addressed to DEC Commissioner Joe Martens, Senator Nozzolio demanded that the DEC apply consistent and comprehensive watershed protections the entire Finger Lakes watershed, and not just to two sources of drinking water.

“Skaneateles is one of the lakes that make up the Finger Lakes, and a regulation that is vital for the safety of one lake should be just as vital to the safety of each lake in the region. I see no rational justification for regulations that single out one lake and exclude every other lake in the Finger Lakes from certain environmental protections. If any of these lakes were to be compromised environmentally, it would undoubtedly have severe effects on the entire region,” Senator Nozzolio stated in the letter.

Senator Nozzolio will read the entire letter to the DEC at the 4th annual Owasco Lake Day, which begins at noon in Emerson Park in Auburn on Sunday, August 7th. Owasco Lake Day is an annual community event sponsored by the Owasco Watershed Lake Association

and the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency where citizens can learn about the ongoing efforts to preserve Owasco Lake, which provides drinking water for the City of Auburn and the dozens of villages and towns along its shores.

“Owasco Lake Day is an excellent opportunity for residents to learn of the positive results that we have achieved in the ongoing clean-up of Owasco Lake. The health of Owasco Lake is absolutely vital to the Finger Lakes region, as is the health of Cayuga, Seneca, Keuka, Canandaigua, Hemlock, and Conesus Lake,” said Senator Nozzolio. “It is disturbing, confusing and inconsistent that the DEC would treat these lakes any differently than Skaneateles. It is critically important that the DEC re-evaluate its determination and take every precaution necessary to protect our fresh water resources, no matter where they are located.”

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Below is Senator Nozzolio's letter to Commissioner Martens:

Joe Martens, Commissioner
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway
Albany, New York 12207

Dear Commissioner Martens:

As the New York State Senator representing the Finger Lakes region and its many beautiful lakes, rivers and streams, it was with great concern that I read the Department of Environmental Conservation's revised draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement on natural gas drilling, issued July 1st.

As you could imagine, the health and environmental viability of the Finger Lakes is essential to the present and future of the region. The Finger Lakes provide the source of fresh drinking water to millions of residents, as well as supporting our tourism and recreational industry and hundreds of local businesses, farms, wineries, and vineyards. While I applaud the DEC's recommendation to exempt the region around Skaneateles Lake from the use of hydrofracking mining, it is particularly disturbing, confusing and inconsistent that the same protections were not extended to all of the lakes within the Finger Lakes watershed.

Skaneateles is one of the lakes that make up the Finger Lakes, and a regulation that is vital for the safety of one lake should be just as vital to the safety of each lake in the region. I see no rational justification for regulations that single out one lake and exclude every other lake in the Finger Lakes from certain environmental protections. The contamination of any of these lakes would undoubtedly have severe and devastating effects on the entire region. Virtually every community in the region with a municipal water system relies on the Finger Lakes or their tributaries for water. Why should Owasco, Cayuga, Seneca, Keuka,

Canandaigua, Hemlock, or Conesus Lake be treated any differently than Skaneateles? If **any** of our lakes and watersheds are in any way compromised environmentally, the results will be just as destructive as if the New York City or City of Syracuse water supplies were affected. Stricter regulations for just two watersheds appears to totally disregard the communities and cities that depend on the rest of the Finger Lakes for clean water.

It is vitally important that our New York State government take every precaution necessary to protect our fresh water resources, no matter where they are located.

It is my strong recommendation that the Department of Environmental Conservation will re-evaluate its determination and do all possible to ensure the integrity of the entire Finger Lakes watershed.

Your immediate attention to this very serious issue is needed and will be appreciated.