



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

## Senator Avella's Mute Swan Bill Passes Senate

ANDREI VASILESCU June 9, 2016

Queens, NY - On Wednesday, State Senator Tony Avella's bill (S.6630) relating to the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) plan to eradicate the Mute Swan population, passed the Senate again with a vote of 61-2. Classified as an invasive species unfairly by DEC, Mute Swans became the subject of controversy when the State announced plans to exterminate their population by 2025.

Senator Avella and many animal rights activists/groups have questioned the claim that mute swans pose a serious danger to the environment.

Avella's bill would require the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to hold two public hearings prior to finalizing their plans to manage the Mute Swan population and create a two year moratorium on any action. They would have to provide scientific evidence for the projected environmental damage caused by the birds. Even if DEC would provide the necessary evidence, the bill would require DEC to seek alternatives to euthanasia.

The bill passed the Assembly, where Assembly Member Steven Cymbrowitz carried the companion bill to Avella's legislation. It will now go to Governor Andrew Cuomo's desk where it will need to be signed before becoming law. Although Governor Cuomo has twice vetoed the bill, Senator Avella remains hopeful that the unrelenting support behind Mute Swans will encourage him to sign it.

“It is absolutely necessary for DEC to first provide scientific evidence to the public on how Mute Swans are expected to damage the environment before eradicating them. I and many animal rights organizations and activists remain skeptical that such drastic measures are necessary until evidence proves otherwise. Even if the evidence is there, it is a humane and moral imperative to find non-lethal means for controlling their population. Although my Mute Swan bill has passed three consecutive sessions and has been vetoed twice by Governor Andrew Cuomo, support has surged every year. I urge Governor Cuomo to finally sign this bill into law and join in the fight to support those who cannot fight for themselves,” said State Senator Tony Avella.