



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jesse Hamilton

Senator Hamilton Issues Call to Protect Oceans & Great Lakes

EAN FULLERTON June 29, 2018

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Brooklyn, NY – Today, Senator Jesse Hamilton urged Governor Andrew Cuomo to push back against Trump Administration erosion of ocean and Great Lakes protections by calling for the Governor to convene the New York State Ocean & Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council.

Senator Hamilton called for the Council to be convened with a broader program of work to include:

- Promoting sustainability, stewardship, conservation, and an environmentally conscious approach to marine life.
- Helping consumers make responsible, sustainable choices (e.g. sustainable seafood) – including households, restaurants, grocery stores, supermarkets, fish shops and other vendors.
- Helping producers choose sustainable practices.
- Promoting proactive action, sustainability, and sensitivity to challenges like climate change and ocean acidification in forums where New York State has voice including, the Atlantic States Marine Fishery Commission, the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council, and in New York’s representations made to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service.
- Identifying and recommending changes to policy, regulations, and law to the Governor and New York State Legislature.

Senator Jesse Hamilton said, “Climate change and ocean acidification will not wait for new policies on the federal level. They will not wait for the last climate denier to acknowledge the realities we face. They will not wait to impose their destructive consequences on us, our children, and our grandchildren. Thus, we must not wait to make serious commitments and shift away from destructive practices towards sustainability.

“Some might say, ‘Why should a landlocked, Central Brooklyn lawmaker be concerned with the Great Lakes and oceans?’ I say: Everyone should be concerned with the health of our oceans and Great Lakes. And as New Yorkers, we have a special obligation to be conscientious about the well-being of the Great Lakes Basin.

“Even as the Trump administration reverses important protections, we here in New York must move forward in enshrining ocean and Great Lakes protections in our regulations and laws. We must embrace measures that protect our oceans and the Great Lakes. Governor Cuomo convening the Ocean & Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council would serve as a step in the right direction and I urge him to take that step.”

Although June is National Ocean Month, President Trump signed a June 19th “Executive Order Regarding the Ocean Policy to Advance the Economic, Security, and Environmental Interests of the United States” revoking Obama-era protections of oceans and Great Lakes; notably, the Trump executive order does not contain the words “conservation,” “climate change,” “acidification,” “biological diversity,” or “social justice.” In addition, this week, reports emerged of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) acting leadership’s presentation suggesting “climate” be removed from NOAA’s mission statement. The Union of Concerned Scientists (June 24) reported the “NOAA Mission Statement Change Would Threaten Climate, Conservation Work.”

As with the June 19th executive order, NOAA’s possible new mission statement strips a focus on conservation, removing the word “conserve” entirely. NOAA’s current mission statement reads: To understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans and coasts; To share that knowledge and information with others; and To conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources. The mission statement suggested by Rear Admiral Timothy Gallaudet reads: To observe, understand and predict atmospheric and ocean conditions; To share that knowledge and information with others; and To protect lives and property, empower the economy, and support homeland and national security.

President Obama’s “Executive Order 13547 - Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes” includes important themes that continue to be important to a focus on preserving the Great Lakes and oceans, including a focus on responding to climate change

and ocean acidification.

If reconvened, the Council would include the the commissioners of agriculture and markets, economic development, environmental conservation, general services, parks, recreation and historic preservation, health, education and transportation; the secretary of state; the president of the energy research and development authority; the president of the environmental facilities corporation; the chairman of the state soil and water conservation committee; and the chancellor of the state university of New York; or their respective designees. In 2006, New York State passed the New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Act, establishing the New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council. The Council convened meetings across the State, including over 300 dialogue participants, to inform a positive discussion on conservation and issued a 2009 report, "Our Waters, Our Communities, Our Future Taking Bold Action Now to Achieve Longterm Sustainability of New York's Ocean and Great Lakes." Sen. Hamilton is Ranking Member of the Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business Committee and a member of the Technology and Innovation Committee.

About Senator Hamilton:

Senator Jesse Hamilton has spent his entire career helping people, including over 15 years as President of the School Board and District Leader. He is a husband, father, and public servant delivering and fighting for one of the most diverse Senate districts in New York State.

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