



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham and Ryan Lead Passage of Bill to Protect Clean Drinking Water in New York

PETE HARCKHAM July 22, 2020

| ISSUE: **CLEAN DRINKING WATER, CLEAN WATER, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**



*Albany, NY* – New York State Senator Pete Harckham and Assemblyman Sean Ryan announced today the passage of a landmark bill (S.5612-A / A.8349) that will protect Class C streams and waterways in New York State.

The bill, which Harckham and Ryan both sponsored, ensures proper access to waterways that are used for drinking water, fishing and recreation by adding Class C streams to those

waterways included the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Protection of Waters Regulatory Program.

“As responsible stewards of our environment, we must always look for opportunities to increase our efforts to safeguard the streams and watersheds around us, and that’s what this legislation does,” said Harckham. “It also maintains the quality of our drinking water around the state while still allowing residents to enjoy fishing, boating and non-contact activities on certain waterways.”

“Here in New York we’ve made great progress in protecting our waterways under the Clean Water Act, and this bill will allow us to continue that work,” said Ryan. “Now more than ever it’s vitally important we take the steps necessary to protect our environment. I’m proud to stand with all of the hard-working groups who have helped us make this bill a reality and thank them for their tireless advocacy for our environment.”

Last year, the Trump administration pushed the federal government to roll back clean water protections that were in place since the Clean Water Act was passed in 1972, and which were later strengthened under President Obama—affecting about 50% of the streams statewide. In New York, however, Class AA and A streams (drinking water sources), Class B streams (swimming and contact recreation) and Class T and TS streams (supporting trout populations and trout spawning) have been afforded the extra, longstanding DEC protection. Now, the Class C streams (supporting fisheries and non-contact recreation) are similarly protected.

More than 11.2 million New Yorkers are dependent on public water systems that rely on small streams to supply clean drinking water. In addition, a recent DEC Angler Survey showed that New York State freshwater sport fisheries generate more than \$2 billion a year and support nearly 11,000 jobs statewide, providing undeniable economic proof of why it’s vitally

important for New York State to preserve and protect its Class C waterways.

The newly passed bill, when signed into law, will extend DEC protections to over 40,000 miles of Class C streams across New York, including Tonawanda Creek and Cayuga Creek in Western New York and the streams in both the Upper Hudson River and Lower Hudson River basins. These protections prevent course modification, bank disturbance, and infilling of all Class C headwater streams.

A wide range of environmental advocacy groups supported Harckham and Ryan's legislation, with the New York League of Conservation Voters noting that Class C streams and waterways are valuable resources that "provide natural resiliency against the impacts of climate change."

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2019-S5612A**

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- Introduced
  
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Vetoed By Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Relates to protection of certain streams

May 09, 2019

Senate Floor Calendar

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Do you support this bill?