



Lake George Association

People Protecting the Lake Since 1885

NEWS RELEASE

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For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LGA Testifies at State Assembly Hearing on Invasive Species

Lake George, NY – Sept 14, 2011– Lake George Association Executive Director Walt Lender testified for a state assembly hearing on invasive species on Tuesday. The hearing reviewed how aquatic and terrestrial invasive species are introduced in New York State, methods to combat the species already present, and the effectiveness of state funding, including Environmental Protection Fund monies.

While environmental groups across the nation spend millions trying to combat invasive species from destroying our natural habitats, many of these same species, including the Asian clam, continue to be sold and transported legally in the state, and the nation.

“We request and strongly support the passage of laws to prohibit and regulate the transport and sale of invasive species in New York State,” concluded Lender in his testimony. Lender described the effort and expense of the Asian clam eradication project in Lake George, which topped \$500,000 in only one year. He also explained the ongoing expense of invasive species management on the Lake, including \$3 million spent since 1995 by several groups to manage Eurasian watermilfoil, \$50,000 spent annually on the LGA’s Lake Steward program, and thousands more spent each year on education and outreach efforts. Lender stated, “If laws were in place prohibiting the transport and sale of invasives, some of this spending might have been unnecessary.”

Lender also requested that additional funds be set aside for invasive species management in Lake George and statewide. “In the case of the Asian clam fight on Lake George for example, local governments and environmental groups contributed over \$400,000, in addition to state funding. But invasive species are not just a Lake George issue. They are a statewide and nationwide threat,” Lender added.

Other testimonies were provided by Michael Goehle, US Fish and Wildlife Service; Chris Amato, assistant commissioner of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation; Troy Weldy, director of ecological management for The Nature Conservancy; Terry Martino, Adirondack Park Agency, and Judy Littrell, NYS Association of Conservation Districts, among others.

The hearing was sponsored by NYS Assemblyman Robert Sweeney, chair of the Assembly Standing Committee on Environmental Conservation. Mr. Lender was invited to testify by Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward. The New York State Invasive Species Council was created in 2008 to coordinate among multiple state entities and partners in addressing the environmental and economic threats of invasive species. The council prepared a report to the legislature and the governor to recommend lists of prohibited, regulated, unregulated species plus a procedure for the review of unlisted non-native species. “Two pieces of this suggested legislation have stalled,” said LGA Education Director Emily DeBolt. “We are hopeful that this hearing will help get things moving forward,” she added.

About the LGA

The LGA is a non-profit membership organization of people interested in working together to protect, conserve, and improve the beauty and quality of the Lake George Basin. It is the nation's oldest lake association. For more information, contact the LGA at 518-668-3558 or visit the LGA website at www.lakegeorgeassociation.org.



Picture caption: Walt Lender, executive director of the Lake George Association testifies at a New York State Assembly hearing on invasive species on Tuesday, September 20, 2011. Mr. Lender spoke out in support of laws to prohibit and regulate the transport and sale of invasive species, both terrestrial and aquatic.

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