Purpose: This bill is intended to minimize the ecological impacts of subdivisions in the Adirondack Park. It will codify and strengthen long-standing and long-ignored Adirondack Park Agency (APA) regulations pertaining to lands that fall under the jurisdiction of the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan. The bill will also expand APA requirements to incorporate contemporary science of conservation development planning when new development proposals come before the APA.

Statement of Support: Conservation science and land use planning techniques have advanced since the original Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan was adopted in 1973. We now realize that the spatial pattern of development is just as, if not more, ecologically important as its overall density.

Because subdivision of land into large residential lots has negative impacts on ecosystems, including on biotic integrity and species diversity and behavior, incorporating modern conservation design principles into development is an approach that will help ensure that functional protection of natural resources is included in any subdivision proposal. This bill would require developers to incorporate conservation design elements into their development proposals to the APA, such as clustering dwellings at one end of a parcel, and would mandate preservation of between 40% and 80% of the tract in contiguous, intact open space.

Analysis of ecological systems and environmental conditions will be required before detailed subdivision plans are drafted. Saving the design to the end of the planning process allows for smaller initial costs and incorporates public and APA input into the subsequent, expensive process of preparing detailed subdivision plans.

This bill also reduces the existing lot size thresholds to which this conservation subdivision design criteria apply. It attempts to minimize roads and driveways and preserve wetlands and large intact forest tracts to protect wildlife habitat and biodiversity. Another result will be to preserve the aesthetic and economic benefits of the park by preventing strip development along major travel corridors.

Our “forever wild” Adirondack Park is threatened by development, overuse in some areas, motorized access, and other human actions that threaten ecosystem integrity.
and reduce the wilderness Article 14 of the NYS Constitution intended to protect. A.8123-A would help reduce the ecological impacts of subdivisions through incorporating conservation science principles in the initial planning stages of any development.

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Urges Your Support of A.8123-A/S.6484