Memorandum of Support

June 7, 2021

S.7010-C (Kaminsky)/A.7735-A (Jones)

Title: An Act to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to aquatic invasive species inspection stations and spread prevention efforts; and to amend chapter 330 of the laws of 2014, amending the environmental conservation law relating to aquatic invasive species, spread prevention, and penalties, in relation to making such provisions permanent.

Summary: Authorizes the establishment of aquatic invasive species inspection stations in Adirondack park to inspect motorized watercraft for the presence of organisms or organic material that may harbor invasive species.

Statement of Support: In the Adirondacks, clean water is essential to many facets of life. The 6 million acre Adirondack Park contains more than 3,000 lakes, 8,000 ponds, and more than 1,500 miles of rivers, fed by an estimated 30,000 miles of brooks and streams. The awe-inspiring region's waters play an imperative role in supporting recreation and tourism, maintaining aquatic ecosystems, and providing drinking water to residents and visitors alike.

Aquatic invasive species infestations are difficult and expensive to control. The "clean, drain, dry" method is the proven technique to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species in the Adirondacks, but it is currently underutilized by the boating public and legislation requiring it expired June 1, 2021.

The legislation would make the program permanent so that boaters must take reasonable precautions to clean, drain, and dry their watercraft before entering New York State waters. It would help protect Adirondack waters by clearly granting the Department of Environmental Conservation the authority to inspect a boat and order decontamination if evidence of aquatic invasive species is found or suspected to be present. It would also require the DEC to create a self-issuing certification for boaters to demonstrate that precautions have been taken to decontaminate a boat prior to launching.

When water quality is impaired, it brings harmful consequences to fishing, boating, and the ecosystem as a whole. Permanently establishing a foundational statutory authority for the region's aquatic invasive species spread prevention program will better protect Adirondack waters, now and many years in the future. Prevention is more cost effective than mitigation, and legislation establishing mandatory inspection and decontamination certification for watercraft in the Adirondack Park is necessary to preserve the region's natural ecological integrity and beauty.

The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Strongly Urges Your Support of S.7010-C/A.7735-A