



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

# **Senator Young Announces State Funding for Chautauqua Lake Cleanup Efforts**

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ALBANY – Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean) announced today that she has secured \$100,000 to battle invasive species in Chautauqua Lake.

Following the \$100,000 of funding that Senator Young secured for the Chautauqua Lake Association (CLA) last year, this year's additional \$100,000 grant will help support the CLA's aquatic weed control initiatives.

"Chautauqua Lake is an economic engine that brings millions of tourism dollars that grow our small businesses and enhance our tax base. The recreational benefits provided by the lake enhance our quality of life, so having a healthy and vibrant lake is very important to our community," she said.

Visitors to Chautauqua County spend millions of dollars every year, which directly translates into thousands of local jobs. The economic impact of the lake is also reflected in the fact that 26% of all property tax revenue is generated by properties near the lake, even though these properties account for only 1% of the total number of homes in the county.

Senator Young said that Assemblyman Andrew Goodell also has been a tireless advocate for the lake.

"This additional State funding obtained through the efforts of Senator Young will help Chautauqua County move forward with the implementation of the submerged aquatic vegetation plan next year," noted Assemblyman Goodell. "This funding

provides critical support for improving the health of Chautauqua Lake, balancing the needs of swimmers, boaters, fishermen, and others who use the lake. Along with changes in the bed tax allocation, continuing progress in upgrading sewer treatment plants to remove more nutrients from the lake, and on-going discussions about extending sewer lines around Chautauqua Lake, we are making important progress.”

“We're so delighted and appreciative. This comes at a time when we have bills to pay. We're so grateful for the Senator's support. Without this we would probably have to take out a loan to pay our bills so we are very grateful for the State's involvement. We have serious ongoing maintenance needs, and this makes a significant difference in our ability to keep the lake usable,” said CLA President Doug Conroe after being told the news by Senator Young.

“This is going to put us in the black. This is something we really needed due to the current economic conditions. It is extremely beneficial and the work that Senator Young does for us is greatly appreciated. Without her help, we would have to curtail our lake operations and would not be able to maintain the crews on the lake that we are currently using,” said CLA General Manager Paul Swanson.

Senator Young said combating aggressive and invasive weeds in Chautauqua Lake was a top priority for her during budget negotiations, especially since she served on the Environmental Conservation Conference Committee that hammered out spending plan details.

Securing the funding was still not an easy task, according to Senator Young, especially since the State had to grapple this year with a \$1.3 billion budget deficit.

“Because Chautauqua Lake brings so much revenue into the state’s economy, this funding is a great investment,” she said.

In recent years, the lake has had to combat significant weed problems due to a combination of weather conditions and limited resources. In spite of challenges, the CLA board and staff, along with local officials and numerous volunteers, have joined residents from around the lake and surrounding communities in monitoring the lake for invasive plant species and keeping the lake as healthy as possible.

Last year, dozens of volunteers joined in organized searches of the lake to identify invasive plants and over 15 million pounds of nuisance vegetation and debris were removed.

“I commend everyone, including Assemblyman Goodell, the county, numerous private donors and volunteers, and the CLA for pulling together on this issue. Everyone has worked together so diligently in supporting the lake,” Senator Young said.

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