



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senate gives final approval to O'Mara-Lifton legislation to combat spread of invasive species

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 20, 2014

| ISSUE: **ENVIRONMENT**



Albany, N.Y., June 20 —The State Senate today gave final legislative approval to legislation sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C-Big Flats) to help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and statewide, by requiring boaters to take reasonable precautions when launching their boats.

The legislation (S.7851-B/A.9619-B) was approved yesterday by the state Assembly, where it was sponsored by Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton (D/WF- 125th District) of Ithaca.

It will now be delivered to the governor to be signed into law.

The legislation requires the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to develop rules and regulations for boaters to take precautions to prevent the spread of invasive species, such as removing all visible plants and animals from, or washing, draining and drying both motorized and non-motorized watercraft and related gear when entering and leaving a launch site.

“Individual boaters are the front line of defense against the spread of invasive species, and this legislation offers a straightforward approach asking all boaters to do our part to help protect waterways, regional tourism economies and local jobs,” said O’Mara, a member of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee. “Taking every possible step to stop the spread of destructive invasive species before they take hold is the most cost-effective and common-sense approach to combat this severe threat to the environment and economy of the Finger Lakes and other waterways statewide. I, together with numerous regional leaders, know firsthand how difficult it’s been trying to eradicate hydrilla from Cayuga Lake in Tompkins County. Greater awareness, education and prevention are the best solutions.”

Some estimates have pegged the annual cost of invasive species to the national economy at \$120 billion a year.

Similar efforts are being undertaken across the country and major outdoor outfitters such as Cabela’s and Bass Pro are helping educate boaters on clean, drain and dry procedures to prevent the spread of invasive species from one body of water to another.