



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

State Budget Funding To Address Owasco Lake Water Quality

JAMES L. SEWARD April 1, 2015

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ALBANY, 04/01/15 -- State Senators John DeFrancisco, Mike Nozzolio and James L. Seward announced today that the new state budget includes a major win for one of Cayuga County's key natural resources.

The senators announced that \$600,000 in state funding has been awarded to the **Owasco Watershed Lake Association** to support ongoing and long-term efforts to improve water quality throughout the watershed.

Senator James L. Seward said, **“Local officials have already embarked on a responsive path toward rejuvenating Owasco Lake and my senate colleague and I are pleased to assist in continuing the work. This grant will further enhance the ability of the Owasco Watershed Lake Association and other stakeholders to make notable improvements to this prime source of drinking water, recreational activity, and future economic development.”**

Senator Mike Nozzolio said, “As State Senator representing the Finger Lakes region, the health of our lakes has always been one of my top priorities. Owasco Lake is one of our region's most unique and magnificent environmental jewels and decisive action needs to be taken to prevent further pollution of the lake. I am pleased my colleagues and I were able to secure this funding to help preserve and revitalize Owasco Lake, ensuring its protection, and securing its potential, for generations to come.”

Senate Finance Chairman John A. DeFrancisco said, “The funding for Owasco Lake is one of many measures included in the state budget that reaffirms our strong commitment to protecting New York’s natural resources. I was pleased to work with the senate team from Cayuga County to secure this vital funding and to help enrich our community.”

Owasco Watershed Lake Association President James Beckwith said, “Owasco Lake is a showcase for so much of what the Finger Lakes have to offer but also has the problem of nutrient enrichment in common with other Finger Lakes. So as we learn how best to reduce phosphorous loading in our watershed, we will be able to help our colleagues throughout the Finger Lakes do the same. Senators Seward, Nozzolio, and DeFrancisco recognize both the lake’s needs and its critical significance to the future of this region. This funding will help advance the work that is already being done by OWLA and its partners, including the agricultural community. This will help ensure a future for Owasco Lake that will enrich the lives of all who visit or live here with clean water, fine wines, and gourmet foods.”

The state funding will help address phosphorous removal and local reduction, inspections and monitoring, public education and outreach, research and project management.

Owasco Lake is the drinking water source for approximately 44,000 residents in Cayuga County as well as an important natural resource for the local economy and many watershed residents. Unfortunately the lake is on the New York State Priority Waterbody Listing as potentially impaired for the following uses: water supply, public bathing, and recreation.

NYSDEC suspects the impairments are caused by, among other pollutants, silt and sediment. Silt and sediment carry nutrients into the lake, including phosphorous.