



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Our Unwavering Commitment To Owasco Lake

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO September 21, 2009

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It's hard to believe that the summer is almost over. As the season winds to a close, it seems an appropriate time to reflect on the significant progress we've made to improve the water quality of Owasco Lake. Owasco is one of our region's most cherished and valuable natural resources. It provides water for Cayuga County residents, supports our unique wine region and is critical to Cayuga County's tourism industry. That is why protecting Owasco Lake has always been a top priority for me.

For the last several years, I have fought aggressively for State assistance to help improve the water quality of the Lake. I've also worked side by side with members of the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) to help preserve our beautiful Owasco Lake. We began by establishing one of the most comprehensive scientific research analysis ever conducted on any of the Finger Lakes. Last year, I was able to secure a \$325,000 in New York State grant for the Finger Lakes Institute to help identify and implement sound environmental practices and under the direction of Dr. John Halfman we have been able to adopt several measures to put Owasco Lake on the right track.

We were greatly successful in convincing the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to reduce the amount of phosphorus discharged from the Groton wastewater treatment plant by one half. With the help of OWLA and Cayuga County we have also

accelerated the harvesting of weeds with new equipment purchased with the \$100,000 New York State grant that I was able to obtain strictly for this purpose. We have already seen a dramatic improvement in the Lake's water quality as a result of these initiatives.

Last summer, in combination with another \$60,000 New York State grant, the City of Auburn, Cayuga County and the Town of Owasco were able to hire a lake steward. Now, for first time, we are able to retrieve important data that allows us to identify and correct any potential source of pollution before it becomes a more serious threat to the Lake's water quality.

There are many challenges that still remain if we are to protect and preserve Owasco Lake. I will continue to fight for the preservation of Owasco day in and day out so that future generations may enjoy an even cleaner, healthier, better Owasco Lake than we have had to privilege of experiencing.