



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel G. Stec

Governor asked to start Overnight Summer Camp planning

DANIEL G. STEC February 3, 2021

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Senator Dan Stec and Assemblymember Matt Simpson are urging Governor Andrew Cuomo to initiate the planning process for the safe opening of sleepaway summer camps this year.

Day camps were able to open last summer with guidance from the State Department of Health. Sleepaway camps, however, were prohibited, which negatively impacted young campers and financially devastated camp operators.

Senator Stec said: “Going away to summer camp is an incredible and often generational tradition in the Adirondacks. It is an unforgettable experience, introducing thousands of children each year to the beauty and the unique environmental quality of our region. So many people who attend summer camp return as adults, driving tourism. The good news is that day camps operating last year worked well, so there is good reason to believe our sleepaway camps can too. But, the planning has to start now.”

Assemblymember Simpson commented: “Introducing nature to our youths with the experience of going away to summer camp does more than offer a lifetime of memories. Especially in a place as beautiful as the Adirondacks, overnight camps helps to create a lasting relationship between younger generations and the natural environment that carries with them into adulthood. If New York is to be a leader in environmental stewardship, our overnight camps are integral to that mission.”

Matt Storey, Director of Camp Dudley in Westport said: “Last summer was the first time since 1885 that we were not able to gather as a community at Camp Dudley. It was a lost summer for our boys that they won't get back. It also meant a huge economic impact to our local community in terms of lost summer employment opportunities. We're doing everything we possibly can to make sure that we will be able to operate safely in the summer ahead. We look forward to working with our partners at the State, County, and Town levels as well as at the American Camp Association to implement the best practices we've learned over the past year. Given the incredible challenges that young people faced in 2020, a summer camp experience in 2021 will be literal lifeline to young people all across New York State.”

In the letter to the governor, signed also by Senator Mike Martucci of the Hudson Valley, the lawmakers wrote: “We are requesting the New York State Department of Health engage immediately with the New York State Camp Directors Association. With appropriate COVID

cautionary measures based on the vast amount of knowledge gained these past 11 months, as well as the hope the vaccine will have its intended effect, all New York camps should ideally have the opportunity to open. Time is of the essence, certainly. Given the financial impact they sustained last year, we are very concerned a significant portion of this industry will not survive if unable to operate.”

A copy of the letter was sent to New York State Health Commissioner, Dr. Howard Zucker.