

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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July is Lake Appreciation Month in New York State



Senator Helming and Assemblywoman Bailey with the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association.



Senator Helming and Assemblywoman Bailey with the Honeoye Valley Association.

Letter to the Editor / Guest Editorial

By Senator Pam Helming

July is Lake Appreciation Month in New York State, and there is certainly much to appreciate.

New York is home to extraordinary freshwater resources. From the Finger Lakes to Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, from Lake Champlain and Lake George to thousands of smaller lakes and reservoirs across the state, these waters are essential to our communities and our future.

They provide drinking water, support local economies and businesses, attract visitors from around the world, provide habitat for fish and wildlife, and create incredible opportunities for boating, fishing and recreation.

Over the Fourth of July weekend, I visited several lakes across our region and had the chance to talk with local residents, business owners and visitors.

The lakes were busy. Boats were on the water, restaurants and shops were full, and families were spending time together along the waterfronts.

It was a simple but powerful reminder of how deeply our lakes are connected to our economy, our communities and our way of life.

That is why Assemblywoman Andrea Bailey and I introduced resolutions recognizing July as Lake Appreciation Month in New York State.

Our resolution is about recognition, but it is also about responsibility.

Our lakes face real and ongoing challenges, including harmful algal blooms, invasive species and other threats to water quality. Protecting them requires good science, research, local leadership, strong partnerships and sustained investment. It also requires strong advocacy.

This past February, organizations from across the Finger Lakes came together at the State Capitol for the first-ever Finger Lakes Advocacy Day.

I met with members of the group to discuss the challenges facing our lakes and many of the same priorities I continue to advocate for, including clean water protection, harmful algal bloom research and long-term investment in our lakes.

When organizations from across the Finger Lakes come together and speak with one voice, they strengthen the case for continued attention and investment in these important resources.

Later that month, the State Senate adopted our resolution recognizing July 2026 as Lake Appreciation Month.

Recognition is important, but it must be backed by action.

This year's state budget included significant funding for environmental protection and clean water infrastructure. My office has provided dozens of letters of support for grant applications seeking funding for projects to protect and preserve water quality throughout our region.

These investments and local projects make a difference, but protecting our lakes cannot be the responsibility of one organization, one community or one level of government. It takes cooperation among watershed groups, local governments, researchers, conservation organizations, property owners, farmers, businesses, volunteers and state leaders.

I am grateful to the people and organizations across New York who do this work every day.

Lake Appreciation Month is an opportunity to celebrate the waters that make New York such a special place. More importantly, it is a reminder of our shared responsibility to protect them.

Working together, we can help ensure our lakes remain clean, healthy and strong for generations to come.

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