STATE OF NEW YORK

8073

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

September 27, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. KELLES -- read once and referred to the Committee on Environmental Conservation

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to designating the department of health as the lead agency in governing watersheds of the eleven Finger Lakes that serve as a source of drinking water for surrounding communities

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

top Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Finger Lakes watershed stewardship act".

§ 2. Legislative intent. It is the intent of the legislature to protect and preserve the Finger Lakes region's natural heritage and clean, cool waters for generations to come. The Finger Lakes is a unique area of our state, made up of 11 lakes and many communities that are home to its local tourism, wine, agricultural, and educational institutions. These glacially carved lakes are especially sensitive to environmental pressures. As a thriving agriculture-tourism region, the Finger Lakes are a major economic engine for the state, generating millions of dollars every year in tax revenue and creating more than 25,000 jobs annually. Home to more than 1.2 million people, nearly 21% of the state's agricultural land, and holding upwards of 4.2 trillion gallons of fresh water that serve more than 2 million residents stretching from Rochester to Syracuse, it is vital that we keep these waters clean and pristine long into the future.

§ 3. Section 1100 of the public health law is amended by adding a new subdivision 6 to read as follows:

6. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to govern all watersheds of the eleven Finger Lakes that serve as a source of drinking water for surrounding communities. The department shall act as lead agency in the development, approval, implementation, and updating of such rules and regulations, and shall consult with the department

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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of agriculture and markets, the department of environmental conservation, and any other state or local agency or government the department shall deem necessary in developing, approving, implementing, and updating such rules and regulations. The department of agriculture and markets, the department of environmental conservation, and any other state agency shall be authorized to enter into memoranda of agreement and/or promulgate any rules or regulations to govern watersheds of the eleven Finger Lakes that serve as a source of drinking water for surrounding communities that are not inconsistent with the rules and regulations promulgated by the department pursuant to this subdivision.

§ 4. This act shall take effect immediately.