STATE OF NEW YORK

8617

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

May 22, 2025

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

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to enacting the "Mohawk River Basin management act"

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

Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Mohawk River Basin management act".

§ 2. The environmental conservation law is amended by adding a new section 11-0306-b to read as follows:

§ 11-0306-b. Mohawk River Basin management program.

1. There is hereby established a Mohawk River Basin district which shall include the Mohawk River from its headwaters in Lewis county to its mouth at the Hudson River at Cohoes. The district shall include the Mohawk River's watershed, including all tributaries and lands that drain to the Mohawk River, and any adjacent areas on which the integrity of the basin depends, including the portion of the New York state Barge Canal that is in or connected to the Mohawk River.

2. The department shall establish and maintain a Mohawk River Basin management program for the Mohawk River Basin district, in order to conserve, protect and restore the environmental quality of the Mohawk River, and to promote the integrated and coordinated management of environmental resources in its watershed, with consideration to the Mohawk River's influence on the Hudson River and estuary, as well as the influence of the New York state Barge Canal.

3. The commissioner shall appoint a Mohawk River Basin management advisory committee to provide guidance on regulatory, policy, and other matters affecting the management, protection, and use of the Mohawk River Basin district and to assist in the development of a Mohawk River Basin management program. The committee shall consist of members representing interests directly involved in the Mohawk River Basin district,

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

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including but not limited to representatives of drinking water supply, recreational fishing, recreational and commercial boating, tourism, research, conservation, natural resources management, agriculture and regional planning. The Mohawk River Basin management advisory committee shall also include ex-officio members of relevant state agencies and authorities, and others, such as representatives of federal agencies, as determined to be needed by the commissioner by invitation.

4. The commissioner shall appoint in the department the position of Mohawk watershed coordinator to assist the commissioner and the advisory committee in the implementation of the Mohawk River Basin management program.

5. The department, in cooperation with the Mohawk River Basin management advisory committee, shall publish a management strategy for the Mohawk watershed and an action agenda to implement ecosystem-based management goals. The action agenda should be updated by January first, two thousand twenty-seven and on a regular basis thereafter, at intervals not greater than ten years. Subject to consultation with the Mohawk River Basin management advisory committee, the management strategy and action agenda shall include, but not be limited to strategies to address issues related to climate change and resilience, land use and development, fisheries and habitats, point and non-point pollution, drinking water, recreation and canal infrastructure. Subject to consultation with the Mohawk River Basin advisory committee, the management strategy and action agenda shall include, but not be limited to the following goals: improving water quality to reduce risks to human health, safeguard water supplies, provide safe recreational opportunities and protect aquatic habitats; enhancing fisheries and habitats to increase populations of desirable fishes, mitigate the spread of invasive species and support recreational angling opportunities; supporting community planning and the sustainable use of working landscapes to enhance the resilience of Mohawk River communities and their ability to recover from extreme weather events and disturbances; and improving and increasing recreation and stewardship by creating and fostering partnerships and stakeholder engagement through education, outreach and collaboration.

6. Within one year of the effective date of this section, the Mohawk watershed coordinator appointed pursuant to subdivision four of this section shall develop a plan for the prevention of the proliferation of all taxa of aquatic invasive species in and through the Mohawk River Basin district, in consultation with the department, the New York state canal corporation, and the Mohawk River Basin program advisory committee. Such plan shall be submitted to the commissioner and the chairpersons of the assembly and senate committees on environmental conservation no later than one year after the effective date of this section. The plan shall identify strategies to prevent the passage of aquatic invasive species across historical watershed divides connected via the New York state Barge Canal. Such plan shall then be implemented via the action agenda developed under subdivision five of this section.

7. On or before January first of each year, the Mohawk watershed coordinator shall report on the progress of the Mohawk River Basin management program, including via a report submitted to the chairpersons of the assembly and senate committees on environmental conservation on or before March first of each year.

8. The Mohawk River Basin management advisory committee shall report to the commissioner from time to time, and at least annually on or before December first of each year on its activities, concerns, and recommendations for the Mohawk River watershed.

9. The Mohawk watershed coordinator shall consult with the Mohawk River Basin management advisory committee regularly in preparing and implementing the watershed management strategy and action agenda under this section, as well as relevant regulatory or policy changes affecting the Mohawk River watershed.

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and completed on or before such effective date.