§ 15-3103. Legislative findings and intent.

The legislature hereby finds and declares that:

1. The waters of the state are one of its most essential natural resources.

2. Adequate supplies of good quality groundwater are critical to the health and welfare of the residents of the state and to their economic well-being. Groundwater contamination exists at levels which exceed applicable standards, criteria and guidance values at many sites around the state, including inactive hazardous waste disposal sites, brownfield sites, and sites contaminated by the discharge of petroleum. The levels and types of contaminants, the extent of contamination, and the present and potential impacts on public health and the environment vary widely from site to site, but cumulatively could endanger the integrity of the water resources of New York state.

3. Due to the complexity of groundwater contamination problems, the restoration of groundwater to its classified use may not currently be feasible at some sites.

4. It is the intent of the legislature that groundwater be protected for its classified use, the highest of which is drinking water.