

Lake George Mirror
October 9, 2009

Adirondack Council Calls for More State Funds for Wastewater Systems

By MIRROR STAFF

In the wake of a sewage spill that forced Lake George Village to close its public beach for most of the summer, New York State should invest new funds to repair and improve wastewater treatment facilities within the Adirondack Park, the Adirondack Council told a New York State Senate hearing on Clean Water last week.

The hearings were sponsored by the New York State Senate's Environmental Conservation Committee, whose ranking minority member is Lake George's representatives in the State Senate, Betty Little.

Approximately \$250 million is needed to upgrade wastewater treatment facilities in the park, Adirondack Council legislative associate Alanah Keddell told the committee.

"In many of the Adirondack Park's small towns and villages, sewage treatment systems are aging or inadequate. Some Park municipalities have centralized systems with aging sewers carrying effluent from homes and businesses to a plant where it is treated before being released into the environment," said Keddell. "New York State received \$21 billion in stimulus funding. It would behoove the state to dedicate a portion of those funds to providing adequate wastewater infrastructure in at-risk areas."

John Sheehan, a spokesman for the Council, added, "We'd like to see New York State assist Lake George. The year-round population is small, but the community is charged with protecting one of our state's greatest resources."

The hearing was held on Thursday, October 1 in Albany. Earlier that week, Lake George Village and Town officials agreed in principle to suspend all new connections to the wastewater collection and treatment system in both the Village and the Town for at least six months.

"We think the moratorium is a good idea," said Sheehan. "The two municipalities have to be assured that the infrastructure can accommodate the community's needs."

The Council also called upon the Senate to pass legislation creating state-wide rules to regulate onsite septic systems.

"The New York State Legislature needs to pass a bill which would require the inspection of septic systems throughout the state at the time of installation and at each transfer of property, when other important inspections are performed," said Keddell. "Regular inspections, certified installers, and overall improvements on design as well as other key elements are necessary if

New York is, in fact, dedicated to preserving the health of its citizens and the integrity of our drinking water and aquatic resources.”

In the absence of state-wide regulations, said Sheehan, the Adirondack Park Agency and the Lake George Park Commission should consider implementing uniform standards that could serve as a model for the rest of New York.