



FOLLOWPA

FINGER LAKES - LAKE ONTARIO WATERSHED PROTECTION ALLIANCE

**New York State Senate and New York State Assembly
Environmental Conservation Committee
SFY 2019-20 Budget Hearing**

Testimony by the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance
Submitted on January 18, 2019
By Kristy LaManche, Program Coordinator

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA). FOLLOWPA is an alliance of 25 New York State counties within the Lake Ontario drainage basin that promotes grassroots programs to protect water resources with participation from numerous agencies and organizations, local governments and individual landowners to control nonpoint sources of pollution, eradicate invasive species, conduct watershed monitoring, and educate and engage the public. FOLLOWPA programs address identified needs as defined in county water quality strategies, comprehensive watershed management plans, state and federal plans, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Priority Waterbody Inventory. The Alliance facilitates the transfer of information, techniques, and resources among the 25 counties so water quality problems can be managed more effectively at the watershed level, despite crosscutting political boundaries and agency jurisdictions.

New York (and FOLLOWPA) needs funding to address critical issues that make our communities desirable for businesses, residents and tourists alike, including conserving clean water; supporting jobs in forestry, agriculture, construction, recycling and tourism; improving community parks and waterfronts; and positioning our municipalities to become more resilient and reduce risk from storm impacts.

Clean, available freshwater is essential to a high quality of life. Respondents to Money Magazine's survey on the best places to live in the United States consistently rate clean water as a top consideration. The two and one-quarter million people that live and work in the Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario region of upstate New York benefit immeasurably from the 260 lakes and more than 16,200 stream miles that distinguish the landscape. These resources provide water supplies for drinking, industry, and agriculture. They support exceptional recreational opportunities and scenic vistas – enhancing the quality of life and making upstate New York more desirable to new businesses and tourists.

of the land by teaming up with FLOWPA to do more work on their property or applying the principles and concepts learned to other activities on their land.

As you know, the Governor has proposed funding the EPF at \$300 million for the fourth year in a row! The Governor has also proposed FLOWPA's funding at \$2.3 million. We respectfully ask the Senate and Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee to support the Governor's proposal for FLOWPA by including us at \$2.3 million in the SFY 2019-20 budget.

FLOWPA continues to be a partner and asset to New York State, especially the Department of Environmental Conservation. We have proven our ability to efficiently and effectively manage not only our State appropriation but have demonstrated the ability to successfully secure and administer over \$6 million dollars in Federal grants that not only benefit our 25 county region, but all of New York State by drawing attention to the collaborative process currently underway to protect New York's freshwater resources; while promoting agriculture, tourism, recreation and economic development.

On behalf of FLOWPA, I respectfully submit this testimony today and ask that you consider maintaining FLOWPA's appropriation in the SFY 2019-20 budget **at \$2.3 million** so that we can not only assist efforts underway with federal and state funded projects, but also develop and implement comprehensive, basin-wide programs that promote public education and citizen involvement and the sharing of information and techniques among watershed partners – FLOWPA's greatest strength and attribute.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony and for your careful consideration of this request.