

**VIA EMAIL**

October 20, 2023

Honorable Governor Kathy Hochul  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Subject: Urgent Appeal to Sign Bill S5957/A5949 - A Crucial Step to Protect New York's Freshwater Wetlands

Dear Governor Hochul,

We, the undersigned concerned organizations from across New York State, write today to urge you to sign Bill S5957/A5949, a pivotal piece of legislation that would significantly strengthen the guardianship of our vital freshwater wetland ecosystems. This bill empowers local governments to fine-tune pesticide regulations in response to their unique ecological contexts, amplifying our environmental protection efforts without compromising on controlled interventions.

New York's wetlands, spanning 2.4 million acres from the Adirondacks to the Lake Plains, are essential for water quality, biodiversity, flood control, and global ecological stability. However, a regulatory gap persists, with local governments lacking the authority to prohibit pesticide use, leaving delicate ecosystems at risk. The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Sackett v. EPA* reduces federal protections over millions of acres of wetlands, leaving them vulnerable to pollution. This jeopardizes clean drinking water sources and underscores the urgent need for state and local action.

Bill S5957/A5949 represents a critical safeguard for local municipalities' freshwater wetlands. By granting localities the authority to prohibit the use of pesticides in specific wetland areas, this bill bolsters environmental protection efforts while preserving crucial ecosystems. This is accomplished without weakening DEC regulations. Small, ecologically significant wetlands often need local attention, given DEC staffing limitations.

This bill strikes a balance, allowing targeted pesticide use when essential for controlling invasives, pests, and protecting native species. It harmonizes environmental conservation with pragmatic management.

We urge you to sign this bill without delay, which will benefit all New Yorkers, leaving a legacy of environmental stewardship for future generations. Please safeguard our invaluable freshwater wetlands.

Thank you for your careful and timely consideration of this critically important matter.

Sincerely,

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