



Cayuga Lake Watershed Network  
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Aurora NY 13026  
[www.cayugalake.org](http://www.cayugalake.org)

*It takes a Network to protect a watershed!*

March 9, 2017

The Honorable Tom Reed  
2437 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Reed:

As an organization working with 45 communities in the 6 counties surrounding Lake Cayuga, we to urge you to strongly oppose all efforts to undermine the Clean Water Act, including the Clean Water Rule (a.k.a., Waters of the United States). These protections are vital to assuring the environmental and economic vitality of New York, the United States and especially the 23<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District.

The Finger Lakes region is defined by its lakes. The 23rd Congressional District includes not only most of Cayuga and Canandaigua Lakes but also all of Seneca, Keuka and Chautauqua Lakes. Critical threats to the health of those lakes are sediment-laden run-offs that occur throughout the watersheds and nutrient run-offs from farmlands—both have harmed plants, fish and wildlife as well as degrading the quality of recreational and drinking water. In each case, the Clean Water Act--specifically, the Waters of the United States rule--offers key protections to our waters by safeguarding wetlands. Those wetlands act as filters, “capturing” harmful nutrient and pollutants before they enter streams and then the lakes.

And what is good for lake quality is also good for economic vitality. Most obviously, Finger Lakes tourism generates revenues of \$2.8 billion every year. Less obviously, the areas tax base is tightly linked to the lakes. In the town of Varick in Seneca County, for example, approximately 80% of the total taxable real estate assessment value in some years has been from lakefront properties. Those tax revenues will decline when living on the lake is less appealing if lake quality diminishes; remaining residents will then scramble to support critical services including schools and fire departments. Again, supporting the Clean Water Act and all the ways it provides to protect and improve lake health is critical.

The mission of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network is to provide research-based information about threats to the health of the Lake and its surrounding communities, and engage area citizens in addressing these threats in ways that benefit everyone. Such common cause transcends partisan boundaries. Clean

air, clean water, parks and recreation lands and lakes, flourishing wildlife, healthy farmlands, social and economic vitality all depend on everyone taking a stand for the best interests of our common future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia F. Gooding". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Patricia Haines-Gooding, Chair  
Board of Directors, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hilary Lambert". The signature is cursive and includes a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Hilary Lambert, Steward/Executive Director  
Cayuga Lake Watershed Network