



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

ANDREW M. CUOMO
GOVERNOR

August 3, 2017

Lieutenant Colonel Adam Czekanski
Commander
United States Army Corps of Engineers
Buffalo District
1776 Niagara Street
Buffalo, NY 14207

Dear Lieutenant Colonel Czekanski:

As communities across the nation struggle to protect water quality, I am requesting you expedite the approval of the Owasco Flats Wetland Restoration Initiative. This is a critical project that will help ensure clean drinking water for tens of thousands of New Yorkers. The innovative initiative will construct wetland basins to trap sediment and nutrients—keeping contaminants out of Owasco Lake, which is a primary source of drinking water for nearly 50,000 residents. Currently, high stream flows from major tributaries carry nutrients directly into the lake, triggering harmful algal blooms that threaten drinking water quality and public health.

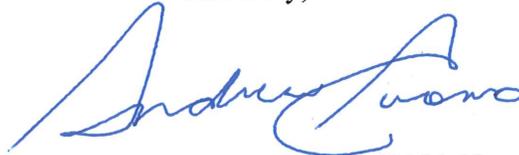
The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has been working collaboratively with your staff to review and advance the proposal. After thorough evaluation, DEC recently issued all relevant state permits, including the Freshwater Wetlands Permit (6 NYCRR Part 663), determining that the project avoids, minimizes and mitigates any adverse impacts to wetlands to the fullest extent possible. The project's significant benefits to water quality clearly outweigh any minimal adverse impacts to ecologically degraded and underutilized wetlands, which have been disconnected from tributaries by channels constructed by the Army Corps in 1948.

The approval of this project will complement the state's ongoing efforts to protect and improve water quality in the region. Beyond a \$712,500 grant to advance this project, the state has provided more than \$2 million to construct state-of-the-art water treatment systems to remove algal toxins from the drinking water supply and has also established the Finger Lakes Water Hub to study algal blooms and undertake pollution reduction projects.

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It is imperative to swiftly advance construction of the Owasco Flats Wetland Restoration Initiative—the health and wellbeing of our communities are at stake. Today, the only remaining obstacle is approval from the United States Army Corps of Engineers, so I urge you to allow this vital project to move ahead expeditiously. DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos is available to provide any additional information or assistance: Basil.Seggos@dec.ny.gov and 518-402-8540.

Sincerely,



ANDREW M. CUOMO