



PRESS RELEASE

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New Bill Would Provide Tax Incentive for Landowners to Protect Wild Forest Lands

Private forest land protected through conservation easements secures statewide benefits of carbon sequestration and storage, and enhanced wildlife habitat

For more information, call Protect the Adirondacks:

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A new proposed bill (Senator May, S5603) would provide real property tax incentives to landowners who voluntarily place permanent protective easements on their forested lands. State law currently provides real property tax reductions for landowners who manage a minimum number of acres of their land for timber production for a period of at least ten years pursuant to a timber management plan approved by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Landowners who meet these criteria receive a real property tax exemption of up to 80 percent of the assessed valuation of the lands subject to the approved timber management plan.

The new bill would provide similar real property tax relief for landowners who place at least ten acres of forested land under a conservation easement that ensures that the tract will be permanently maintained as wild forest land and prohibits the cutting, removal or destruction of trees on the tract (with certain exemptions such as DEC-approved actions to address invasive species). The bill provides a financial incentive for landowners to maintain wild forest lands that are important for carbon storage and sequestration, a critical strategy for mitigating climate change; provide wildlife habitat, improve habitat connectivity, and avoid habitat fragmentation; and help New York meet its statutory goal of conserving 30 percent of lands in the state by 2030 pursuant to the 30 by 30 Act.

“Protecting intact mature forests and keeping them growing for decades to come will reduce carbon in the atmosphere and help to achieve New York’s goals in the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) and in the 30 by 30 Act,” said Claudia Braymer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks. “This is a win-win for New Yorkers, and we encourage the Legislature to pass this bill this legislative session to give forests a better chance to thrive and persist despite ever-present development pressures that would result in forest losses. We thank Senator May for recognizing the need for moving this critical bill forward to conserve New York’s forests.”

Protect the Adirondacks!

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This new bill incentivizing permanent protection of private forest lands will be particularly beneficial for landowners in the Adirondack Park where there are millions of acres of privately owned forests that are at risk of conversion to non-forestry uses.

Finally, the bill provides state assistance to municipalities that lose real property tax revenues as a result of landowners enrolling in the timber management or conservation easement tax relief programs. Currently, municipalities often make up for the lost tax revenues by collecting more real property taxes from landowners who are not enrolled in a tax relief program, leading to inequitable real property taxation. The proposed bill would tap state revenues collected by the real property transfer tax to provide state assistance to municipalities to remedy this problem. The State assistance will secure the Statewide benefits of forest protection and safeguard local municipalities and local taxpayers from being unfairly burdened by these tax incentives.

Protect the Adirondacks

Protect the Adirondacks is an IRS-approved non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and stewardship of the 6-million-acre Adirondack Park. Our mission is to protect the Adirondack Park's wild character for current and future generations. PROTECT pursues this mission through a combination of advocacy, grassroots organizing, independent public oversight, research, water quality monitoring, education, and legal action. Protect the Adirondacks was formed in 2009 as the result of a merger between two long-standing environmental conservation groups in the Adirondack Park, the Resident's Committee to Protect the Adirondacks (est. 1991) and the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks (est. 1901).

Protect the Adirondacks is managed by a 22-member Board of Directors of Adirondack leaders with expertise in environmental law, local government, Adirondack environmental and cultural history, state agency management, and small business. Protect the Adirondacks maintains an office in a 100% energy efficient, solar-and wind-powered office in Johnsbury in the central Adirondacks. For more information see www.protectadks.org and @ProtectAdkPark.

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