



Onondaga County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs

Honorable Daniel Maffei
U.S. House of Representatives (NY-24th)
1630 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: **Continued Funding for Cormorant Control Program on Oneida Lake**

February 1, 2009

Dear Congressman Maffei:

The Onondaga County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs represents over 5,000 members in over 40 Sporting Organizations throughout Central New York.

The Onondaga County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs wishes to indicate its strong support for continued funding of the cormorant harassment program on Oneida Lake. This program has been administered as a partnership between the USDA and the NYSDEC, whose state and federal staff have worked together on lakes Ontario, Erie, Champlain, and Oneida, plus the St. Lawrence River to minimize cormorant predation on desirable perch and game fish populations.

The Oneida Lake Association, a member club of the Onondaga County Federation, has strongly supported the cormorant harassment program since it became operational in the mid 1990's. Cormorants had significantly reduced the numbers of Oneida Lake's principal sport fish populations, walleye and perch, by the mid 1990's. The result was a significant decline in angling effort by 1996, and reduced sport-fishing income for the Oneida Lake region.

Since the late 1990's, the USDA cormorant harassment program has helped chase away the cormorants, and Oneida Lake's walleye and perch population has rebounded. According to Matt Snyder, president of the Oneida Lake Association, "the bulk of the increase [in the sport fish population] can be attributed to the success of the cormorant control program."

NYSDEC Commissioner Pete Grannis has indicated that “If the cormorant management program stops, it is likely that the local economy will suffer significant harm due to the loss of walleye and perch fisheries.” The importance of Oneida Lake to sport fishing in the Central New York region is highlighted by findings of the 2007 Angler Survey results released by the NYSDEC just recently. Oneida Lake had the second most angler days spent on any water body in New York State, at 786,000 angler days in 2007, behind only Lake Ontario with 1.3 million angler days.

The economics of sport fishing are very important to Oneida and Onondaga Counties in Central New York. Fishing is big business across New York. The NYSDEC’s 2007 Angler Survey shows that across New York State, anglers spent about \$530 million in direct expenditures at fishing sites or on the way to fish. The county in which they spent the most (\$42 million) was Oswego (home county of Oneida Lake), and fishing is deemed to be the biggest tourism draw in Oswego County.

Since a portion of Oneida Lake lies within Onondaga County, and Onondaga County contributes the majority of the lake’s sport anglers, the Onondaga County Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs wishes to state its strong support for continuation of federal funding for the cormorant control program on Oneida Lake.

Les Monostory,
Vice President and Fish Committee Chairman,
Onondaga County Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs

Stephen Wowelko,
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