



Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

## MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

### *LOCAL PROHIBITION OF PESTICIDES ON WETLANDS*

**S.5957 - HARCKHAM**

**A.5949 - BURDICK**

**Description:** Allows local governments that have opted to adopt a local freshwater wetlands protection local law or ordinance to also have the ability to pass a local law or ordinance to restrict the use of pesticides on wetlands that it regulates

#### **Justification**

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) estimates that there are approximately 2.4 million acres of wetlands in New York. Wetlands preserve biodiversity by providing unique habitat to countless species of fish, wildlife and plants. Some animals spend their entire life in wetlands, while others utilize these areas as feeding, breeding and nesting grounds. More than half of all threatened or endangered species depend on wetlands during their lifecycle.

Pesticide exposure can be linked to cancer, endocrine disruption, reproductive effects, neurotoxicity, kidney and liver damage, birth defects, and developmental changes in a wide range of aquatic wildlife, many of which depend upon wetlands for survival. Exposure to pesticides can also alter an organism's behavior, impacting its ability to survive.

The DEC has regulatory authority to restrict the application of pesticides within areas designated as wetlands. Currently, a local government that has opted to assume regulatory authority of freshwater wetlands in their jurisdiction does not have the authority to implement or expand restrictions on the application of pesticides within their borders.

This legislation will allow those local governments that have opted to adopt a local freshwater wetlands protection local law or ordinance to also have the ability to pass a local law or ordinance to restrict the use of pesticides on wetlands that it regulates. The local law cannot prohibit pesticide application for the control of invasive species, pests, noxious weeds, or for the protection of native plant species.

The unnecessary use of harmful pesticides in wetlands threatens aquatic life, including threatened and endangered species, as well as water quality and public health. Local governments that have opted to take on the role of protecting wetlands in their jurisdiction deserve the right to protect biodiversity and wetlands from the significant threats posed by the use pesticides.

**CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS  
S.5957/A.5949 – Local Prohibition of Pesticides on Wetlands**

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*CCE is a 120,000-member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment*

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