**CLP “Keep the Lake a Lake” Campaign Status Report**

**As of July 18, 2024**

The DEC has continued to confirm their intent to regulate much of Chautauqua Lake as wetlands. <https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/FAQ%20Sheet%20Chautauqua%20Lake_Final.pdf>

The public comment period for Part 664 has reopened after recent publication of the latest version. No changes were incorporated to provide for exemption of lakes.

The email campaign directed to DEC leadership has been closed out with a final tally of **263** letters from local residents objecting to wetlands regulation for the lake.

Continuation of the Keep the Lake a Lake campaign will continue with:

* Part 664 Comment Letter
	+ New: Published 7/18/24
* Support Letter for Bill S9799 (Legislative number not yet available)
	+ Current count: 30 Letters
* [Change.Org Petition](https://www.change.org/p/keep-the-lake-a-lake) “Keep the Lake a Lake”
	+ Current count: 1885 Signatures

**Reference timeline of preceding events:**

June 2023, Chautauqua Lake Conference at Chautauqua Institution

* Julie Barrett-O’Neill NYSDEC Region 9 Director made comments regarding the potential impacts from the 2022 wetlands law
* She noted that the DEC was evaluating the new wetlands amendment and noted that it may have applicability to the south basin of Chautauqua Lake as the South Basin has wetlands characteristics
* CLP solicited the public to write letters to the DEC following these comments
* Julie Barrett-O’Neill responded to PJ Wendell rearging these concerns in writing: “Regarding questions over Burtis Bay and other existing parts of Chautauqua Lake, these areas will still be considered a lake under New York State Environmental Conservation Law and associated regulations. DEC will continue to work with Chautauqua Lake municipalities and stakeholders to ensure you are informed of the implementation steps of the new Wetlands law and have an opportunity to provide your perspectives as this initiative advances. “

The DEC Public Comment Period opened in January and closed Feb 19, 2024

* Letters were solicited (unknown number sent to DEC)
* Several letters shared to CLP specifically questioned the broad classification criteria which would be inclusive of lake near-shore areas
* Questions asked relating to lakes during a public webinar were ignored
* No further response from the DEC came forth

News articles & public meetings regarding the NYS DEC declaring intent to regulate “much of the South basin” as Wetlands

* Concern raised by Lakewood Council in Feb 17 article <https://www.observertoday.com/news/local-region/2024/02/dec-proposal-may-have-economic-impact-on-lakewood/>
* Mar 2, 2024 DEC spokesman Pignetarro statements pertaining to the South Basin <https://www.observertoday.com/subscribe/?ref=articleMax>
* Mar 9 Keep the Lake a Lake article 2024<https://www.post-journal.com/news/top-stories/2024/03/keep-the-lake-a-lake/>
* March 11, 2024 Julie Barrett O'Neill, Regional Director of NYS DEC Region 9, along with Chautauqua County Executive PJ Wendel, Town Supervisors, local Mayors, and stakeholders convene to discuss Chautauqua Lake's Wetland status <https://chqgov.com/county-executive/news/video-nys-dec-chautauqua-lake-wetland-presentation>
* Mar 16 CLP Public Meeting discussing Wetlands issue and risks to Chautauqua Lake <https://chqlake.org/2024/03/clp-meeting-summary-and-powerpoint-presentation/>
* Mar 22 Summary of video by WRFA <https://www.wrfalp.com/dec-officials-try-to-clear-confusion-over-how-wetland-act-will-impact-chautauqua-lake/>
* Mar 29 PJ Wendell frustrated that people are not satisfied with results of March 11 meeting with DEC officials <https://www.wrfalp.com/listen-community-matters-pj-wendel-march-28-2024/>
* Mar 30 Kicked off “Keep the Lake a Lake” Campaign with letters enabled on CLP Website <https://chqlake.org/advocate-write-to-officials/>
* April 14 Yard Signs available to the public
* April 16, 2024 Opened Change.org Petition “Keep the Lake a Lake” <https://www.change.org/p/keep-the-lake-a-lake>
* Flyers at NYSFOLA conference May 3 (Stolen by a conference attendee)
* Memorial Day CLP Rally/Public Meeting
* June 2 Chautauqua County Lake Symposium

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpqmNhugYLg>

* Give Big Chautauqua fundraiser
* CLP table with Wetlands Flyer at the June 22 Chautauqua Institute lake Conference
* DEC confirmed their intent in writing on a new Chautauqua Lake Watershed web page: <https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/lakes-rivers/chautauqua-lake-watershed-program>
* DEC FAQ specific to Chautauqua Lake: <https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/FAQ%20Sheet%20Chautauqua%20Lake_Final.pdf>

Planned

* Renewed call-to-action for lake stakeholders to write letters during the DEC Part 664 comment period
* Renewed call-to-action for letters of support for bill S9799
* Renewed call-to-action to sign Keep the Lake a Lake petition
* Call for donations to support legal action
* Labor Day CLP Rally/Public Meeting - Looking for DEC Participation