

Petition to Ask Governor Cuomo to Develop, Adopt, and Implement a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Owasco Lake

We the undersigned request that Governor Cuomo take urgent, immediate action to resolve the blue-green algae water quality hazards in Owasco Lake that threaten the source of drinking water for more than 50,000 people from Auburn, Owasco, Fleming, Aurelius, Port Byron, Sennett, Throop, Cayuga, Montezuma, Mentz, Brutus, and Weedsport. The New York State Department of Health (DOH) must undertake a study in order to determine how drinking water drawn from Owasco Lake can be treated in order to minimize the presence of microcystins. We also request that improved treatment be implemented as soon as practicable. In 2014, Owasco Lake was included in the Section 1 of the 303(d) national registry of impaired waterbodies by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Despite this designation, no Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) comprehensive watershed clean up plan has been proposed, adopted or implemented. In fact on the Proposed Final 303(d) list of 2016, Owasco Lake is currently in Section 3a and is now being deferred “Requiring Verification of Impairment.” We request that a Total Maximum Daily Load be developed, adopted, and implemented for Owasco Lake. We also request that any TMDL developed to safeguard this critical source of drinking water fulfill the “System-Specific Surface Water Evaluation” scope of work spelled out in the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) guidance for addressing this concern.

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