



DAVID A. PATERSON
GOVERNOR

ALEXANDER B. GRANNIS
COMMISSIONER

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12233-1010

FEB 17 2010

Honorable Daniel B. Maffei
United States House of Representatives
1630 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-3225

Dear Congressman Maffei:

I am writing in support of a request by the Oneida Lake Association for a Federal Fiscal Year 2011 to restore federal funding for cormorant management activities. This program has been a partnership between DEC and the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) - Wildlife Services program (Wildlife Services). Our staffs work together on Lakes Ontario, Erie, Champlain and Oneida and the St. Lawrence River to minimize cormorant damage to recreational fisheries, nesting migratory bird populations, and rare vegetation communities.

From 2004 to 2009, Congress appropriated funds to manage cormorants in New York. Unfortunately, this funding was eliminated in FY 2010. Wildlife Services used these funds to assist New York in protecting local economies, recreational fisheries, nesting migratory bird populations and rare terrestrial habitats from the impacts of cormorants. An appropriation is needed in FY 2011 to reinstate the Wildlife Services program to manage cormorants. The benefits to recreational fisheries and migratory birds are significant.

Cormorants caused the collapse of the walleye and yellow perch fishery on Oneida Lake, resulting in the loss of an estimated 12,000 jobs and \$539 million in revenue during the 1980's and 1990's to the four-county area bordering Oneida Lake. There will very likely be an impact on the local economy if the cormorant management program ends, as DEC, for obvious reasons, is unable at this time to include the cost for projects previously funded by Wildlife Services. Since Wildlife Services started the cormorant management program, these fisheries have begun to recover, saving approximately 5,000 jobs and \$171 million in revenue over the last five years in the four-county area. Additionally, common tern populations, a species of special management concern in New York, have increased on Oneida Lake since these birds no longer need to compete with cormorants for nesting sites.

Given the importance of cormorant management to the natural resources and economy of Oneida Lake, I am hoping you might be able to address the Oneida Lake Association's request for an FY 2011 appropriation for the Wildlife Services cormorant program.

Sincerely,

Alexander B. Grannis