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## Adirondack Council pushes for climate bill provisions

By PAUL POST, The Saratogian

SARATOGA SPRINGS — A climate change bill before Congress deals with carbon emissions, but doesn't restrict pollutants that cause acid rain, an environmental group says.

The proposed Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act does not include provisions to reduce sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and mercury, the main causes of acid rain and mercury contamination in the Adirondacks.

The Adirondack Council is pushing to have such controls put in the legislation.

“We would like to see a bill that Congress approves that can withstand legal challenges,” spokesman John Sheehan said.

In 2003, President George W. Bush authorized the Clean Air Interstate Rule by administrative action, prompting many polluters — primarily Midwestern power plants — to make environmental improvements. However, a federal court struck the measure down last year after some of those same companies challenged its legality.

The Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act would have more teeth because it's a legislative action. As proposed, the bill calls for an 83 percent reduction in U.S. carbon emissions by 2050. The law, if approved, would have a far-reaching impact on everything from electricity generation to the way cars are manufactured and the type of fuels they use.

At present, however, it doesn't have the elements needed to prevent acid rain, which has killed off fish and other forms of marine wildlife in numerous Adirondack lakes and streams. The council wants provisions included that would cut sulfur and nitrogen emissions by 70 percent, and mercury pollution by 95 percent, by 2015.

The measure is sponsored by U.S. Sens. John Kerry, D-Mass., and Barbara Boxer, D-Calif. The council is calling on U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., to lead the fight in getting acid rain language included in the bill.

“Sen. Gillibrand is also concerned by the lack of attention to acid rain in the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act,” spokesperson Bethany Lesser said. “She plans to work with her colleagues as a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee to address the causes of acid rain.”

In 1990, Congress approved Clean Air Act amendments that mandated 50 percent reductions in sulfur, nitrogen and mercury by 2010. With those rules about to end, the council wants to see tough, new laws enacted that would finish the job of cleaning up Adirondack waterways.

“We want to make sure the Senate does not miss this golden opportunity to put an end to acid rain once and for all,” said Brian Houseal, the council’s executive director.

On a parallel track, the council is pushing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to adopt similar rules.

“It’s the same goal, two different tracks because you never know what kind of road blocks there might be,” Sheehan said. “It’s good to have a back-up.”