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## Review Board's Activities Questioned, Even as it Raises Funds from Localities

By ANTHONY F. HALL

Hoping to offset cuts in state funding, the Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board has requested financial aid from local governments.

The Board, which was established by the New York State legislature to monitor the Adirondack Park Agency, has asked for contributions from every municipality within the Adirondack Park, said its executive director, Fred Monroe.

Some municipalities have complied with the Review Board's request, including the Village of Lake George.

The Town of Bolton is unlikely to contribute any funds, said Supervisor Ron Conover.

"We have our local priorities that demand our attention," said Conover.

The Town of Lake George has denied the Review Board's request, said Supervisor Frank McCoy.

"We agreed to appropriate \$250 this year, because we support the Review Board's mission as a watchdog," said Lake George Village Mayor Bob Blais. "Lake George Village supports reasonable development within the Adirondack Park to keep our young folks here, and we believe the Review Board furthers that goal."

The Review Board, however, has come under increasing scrutiny for activities that appear to exceed its legislative mandate and environmental groups question whether that's an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars.

"Local governments should be aware that every dollar given to the Adirondack Park Local Governmental Review Board is a dollar spent against environmental protection in Lake George and the Adirondacks," said Peter Bauer, the executive director of The Fund for Lake George.

"The Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board is working in opposition to the Adirondack Park Agency rather than as its advisor," said John Sheehan, a spokesman for the Adirondack Council. "I'm not certain taxpayers want to foot that bill."

According to Sheehan, the Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board was created by the legislature specifically to monitor the administration and enforcement of the Adirondack Park land use.

Sheehan said funds solicited from local governments are quite possibly being used by the Review Board for purposes other than what the legislature intended, such as retaining Behan Communications, a public relations firm, or lobbying the Governor's office.

To learn how the Review Board is spending taxpayers' dollars, the Adirondack Council has submitted a request under the Freedom of Information Law for details fo the Review Board's expenses, said Sheehan.

"We'd like some transparency; frankly, it's a request we should have made twenty years ago," said Sheehan.

"The FOIL request is a form of harassment, or an attempt to get information that can be used to attack us in the media; it's a reaction to our successes," said Fred Monroe.

An example of tat success, Monroe said, was the effort to block the Senate's confirmation of Peter Hornbeck, whom the Governor nominated for a seat on the Adirondack park Agency.

But John Sheehan said that effort was a better example of the kind of activity that exceeds the Review Board's mandate.

Monroe said that he would provide the Adirondack Council with the information request, but assembling it would be time-consuming.

"If this is an attempt to intimidate me, it won't work," said Monroe.