

**ACID RAIN DAMAGE SUBSIDES FOR TWO MORE ADIRONDACK LAKES,
MORE POLLUTION CUTS NEEDED SO HUNDREDS MORE CAN RECOVER**
*Trends Show Regulations Working, But Congressional Action Needed to Bring Damage to End in
Adirondack Park, Catskills, Hudson Highlands*

For more information:
John F. Sheehan
518-432-1770 (ofc)
518-441-1340 (cell)

Released: Thursday, February 4, 2010

WASHINGTON, D.C. – One of the nation's leading voices in the fight against acid rain today praised US Sen. Thomas Carper, D-Delaware, for introducing legislation that would require air pollution cuts from the smokestacks of power plants across the nation.

"We will call on the New York Congressional delegation to support this bill. The timing of this legislation could not be better," said Brian L. Houseal, Executive Director of the Adirondack Council. The bill is known as the Clean Air Planning Act of 2010.

"New York State just removed a major Adirondack lake and well-known Adirondack pond from the official list of polluted and impaired waters," Houseal explained. "These waters recovered their health because of the cuts made in sulfur and nitrogen pollution upwind of the Adirondack Park. This allowed them to regain their natural water chemistry. It is great news and all New Yorkers have a reason to celebrate this milestone.

"But we still have far to go before the Adirondack Park will fully recover from decades of acid rain," said Houseal. "Hundreds of lakes and ponds remain too acidic to support their native wildlife. In others, the wildlife is being steadily poisoned by mercury contamination, which is worsened by the acidic conditions in the soils and waters."

Houseal said that legislation introduced in Congress this week by Senator Carper would control the three main pollutants causing the most damage to the Adirondack Park, as well as the state's two other major areas of acid rain damage – the smaller Catskill Park and the Hudson Highlands.

The Carper bill would reduce the amount of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) permitted each year to drop from the current level of 9.5 million tons down to 1.5 million tons by 2018, a reduction of 80 percent. It would also reduce nitrogen oxides (NO_x) emissions from the current level of 3 million tons to 1.62 million tons by 2015, a decrease of 50 percent. In addition, it would require new regulations to decrease mercury emissions by at least 90 percent by 2012.

New York passed the nation's first acid rain control laws in 1984, imposing a cap-and-trade emissions reduction program for sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides from the state's electric power plants. Other Northeast states followed and Congress finally took action via the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. The CAAA cuts resulted in a 50 percent drop in sulfur dioxide nationwide. The combination of state and federal emissions controls has reduced pollution enough to save Cranberry Lake and Gull Pond.

But deeper cuts will be needed – including year-round controls in nitrogen oxides and mercury emissions – before the most heavily damaged areas of the Adirondack Park and the rest of Upstate New York can hope to fully recover their vitality.

"We had hoped that the Clean Air Interstate Rule would provide those needed cuts and speed the recovery process by imposing pollution reductions deep enough to stop both acid rain and smog in the Northeast," Houseal said. "But the US Supreme Court vacated the rule in December 2008, and told EPA to start over. The fact that the rule was so easily overturned in court shows that we need direct

Congressional action on acid rain. Rules are nice, but laws are more durable and effective.

New York's Congressional delegation has a long history of sponsoring legislation to curb acid rain," concluded Houseal. "From Senators Moynihan, D'Amato, Clinton and Schumer to Representatives Solomon, Boehlert, Sweeney and McHugh, all have stepped up and made this an issue for Congress to consider. We are urging our current New York House and Senate members to once again take up this cause and assist Senator Carper in passing this important bill."

The Adirondack Council is a privately funded, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park. Founded in 1975, the Council doesn't accept government funding or taxpayer-supported donation of any kind. The Council has members in all 50 United States and carries out its mission through research, education, advocacy, and legal action.