

The Leader Herald
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Review plan to update rules

The Adirondack Council is pushing Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the state Legislature to update 40-year-old rules for private land use and development in the Adirondack Park. State leaders should give the proposal consideration.

The council, an environmental organization, says the current Adirondack Park Agency rules for development are too weak and outdated.

Among other concerns, the council is worried about people building new homes and businesses too close to shorelines, on steep slopes or in places that wildlife needs to survive.

After the APA's recent approval of the Adirondack Club and Resort project in Tupper Lake - which includes 650 units on 6,200 acres - opponents, supporters and APA commissioners said the park agency's rules weren't good enough. They said the process for reviewing applications requires changes, according to the Adirondack Council.

In addition, only 19 of the park's 103 towns and villages have modern land-use plans. As a result, nine out of 10 homes are located outside a village or hamlet, and communities are declining, according to the council.

The council proposes the state do the following: modernize the APA's land-use code to better protect the park's wildest land; protect water quality by developing a water classification system for lakes and rivers; improve the delivery of state agency services to the public by changing their regional boundaries to coincide with the park boundary; strengthen the APA's enforcement program by reinstating enforcement staff that were reassigned because of budget cuts; and revitalize local communities by providing money and expertise to complete local land-use plans.

We would hesitate to support new hiring and grants, but state officials should look at the need to update land-use and development rules.

Our local state lawmakers and people living in the Adirondack Foothills should review the suggested measures. For more information about the proposal, visit www.adirondackcouncil.org