

Tompkins County Water Resources Council

RESOLUTION 2020-02: SUPPORTING THE ADOPTION OF THE REVISED OWASCO LAKE WATERSHED RULES AND REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Water Resources Council is to advise Tompkins County and local governments on matters pertaining to water resources in Tompkins County, to serve as Tompkins County's Water Quality Coordinating Committee, and to further identify problems; recommend strategies to address problems; establish priorities; promote coordination of activities in the protection, development, and management of the water resources in Tompkins County; and provide a public forum for the discussion and resolution of issues and problems; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Public Health Law Section 1100, the New York State Department of Health adopted Title 10 of the New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations, water purveyors are granted the authority to develop and update Watershed Rules and Regulations for the preservation of public drinking water sources and protection from point and nonpoint source pollution; and

WHEREAS, in the Tompkins County Water Quality Strategies Report 2016-2018 and 2019-2021, the Water Resources Council identifies as a priority action item the review and update of existing Watershed Rules and Regulations for water purveyors to protect surface drinking water supplies, and has an established subcommittee to address this goal; and

WHEREAS, since the original Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations were adopted in 1984 the lands within the Owasco Lake watershed have witnessed cumulative changes in land use and development; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, as a part of the continued efforts to protect water quality, the City of Auburn, the Town of Owasco, and Cayuga County passed resolutions endorsing a project to update and revise the 1984 Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations; and

WHEREAS, over the last three years, the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations Steering Committee has worked diligently and used a very engaged public process with staff representatives, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and Project Stakeholder groups, in a coordinated effort to create and recommend a revised draft of the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations; and

WHEREAS, on October 29, 2020, a final draft of the revised Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations was endorsed by the City Council of Auburn and the Town Board of Owasco; and

WHEREAS, on October 29, 2020, the City Council of Auburn and the Town Board of

Owasco requested that New York State repeal the 1984 Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations and replace them with the revised 2020 Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations; and

WHEREAS, the Water Resources Council encourages water purveyors in Tompkins County, namely, Bolton Point, City of Ithaca, and Cornell University Water Treatment Plants, to endeavor to establish or undertake their own update to their Watershed Rules and Regulations to protect and preserve drinking water supplies, involving significant expenditure of time, resources, and outreach to community stakeholders, and encourages New York State to recognize these efforts and facilitate completion of this process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Water Resources Council does hereby express support to the Town of Owasco and City of Auburn in their efforts to update the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that while the Water Resources Council does not specifically endorse any rule or regulation within the revised Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations, the Water Resources Council endorses any revisions based on the authority of the Town of Owasco and City of Auburn to do so, and the communal process by which those revisions were made; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Water Resources Council does hereby request that the New York State Department of Health repeal the existing 1984 Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations, which are cited at 10 New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations, Section 104.1, and replace the same with the revised Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Water Resources Council does hereby request that the Tompkins County Legislature adopt a substantially similar resolution of support.

Approved December 21, 2020