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Assistant Director and Senior Scientist
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March 3, 2005

Ms. Jaclyn A. Brillling, Secretary
NYS Public Service Commission
3 Empire Plaza
Albany NY 12223-1350

Reference: CASE 05-M-0090

Dear Public Service Commission:

I am writing to support continued funding for the monitoring of Adirondack lakes conducted by the Adirondack Lake Survey Corporation. I am a research scientist with expertise in aquatic ecosystems and hence my comments are addressed to both the environmental importance of the monitoring as well as the research benefits that this study provides.

The long term monitoring Adirondack lakes is essential to understanding ongoing recovery from acidification. While positive benefits of air pollution control are becoming evident from the data collected to date, additional observations are needed to document recovery and to evaluate whether pollutants such as nitric acid might reverse or retard lake recovery. The Adirondack Survey Corporation does an excellent job of maintaining a high quality data series on water chemistry. Their work is well respected in the scientific community. Their data are also valuable to scientists conducting research. For example, the Adirondack Lake Survey data have been useful in evaluating a variety of long term trends. One trend that has been observed in the Adirondacks and increasingly in other northern regions around the world is an increase in the dissolved organic carbon concentration in lakes. This change may reflect, in part, a recovery of the lakes from acidification. However, watershed scientists are also concerned that the changes in dissolved organic carbon may be related to climate change effects on forests that lead to increase losses of carbon to lakes. While this idea is uncertain, the results to date point to the value of having high quality monitoring data for assessing long term trends in our environment.

The work of the Adirondack Lake Survey Corporation is vital to protecting the lakes and resources of the Adirondack Park. The data are of value both for the specific objective of assessing changing impacts from acid rain as well as novel observations about how the environment is changing in ways that we might not expect. I hope you will continue your support of this vital program.

Sincerely,


Michael L. Pace
Assistant Director and Senior Scientist

MLP/tlr

cc: Chairman, NYSERDA, Albany, NY