

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 14, 2020

Mr. Rickey Dale James
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Mr. James:

We write to request that you allocate funding for the Chautauqua Lake Feasibility Study as an Investigations New Start project in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Fiscal Year 2020 Work Plan. We worked alongside our colleagues in Congress to secure New Starts funding for USACE in the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020. As a result, we now urge you to allocate \$300,000 in New Starts funding to begin addressing the environmental harmful algal bloom (HAB) challenges that threaten the economic development of the surrounding area.

Chautauqua Lake is not used only by residents and visitors as a source of drinking water; it represents the most important economic asset for the surrounding 14 municipalities within the lake's watershed. The lake is a huge draw for tourists using recreational watercraft, swimmers, kayakers, and anyone else who wishes to enjoy the water. Regrettably, however, with 1,515 commercial farms, 15,500 acres of grapes, and eight wineries, Chautauqua Lake is particularly susceptible to the impact of HABs due to high phosphorus-rich runoff. Since 2017, Harmful Algal Bloom outbreaks have caused 22 beach closures and led to a total of 286 lost recreational days.

As you may know, in the Water Resources Development Act of 2018, we were pleased to authorize a feasibility study for Chautauqua Lake to address ecosystem restoration. We have also been informed that this is the number one aquatic ecosystem project for an Investigation New Start at the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. With a total estimated cost of \$3 million, this study needs a mere \$300,000 to begin to tackle this alarming environmental, health, and economic problem. Therefore, we urge you designate and fund the Chautauqua Lake Feasibility Study as an Investigations New Start.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or our staff.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator