



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

News Release

For immediate release
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DEC AND MONROE COUNTY ANNOUNCE VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING TO FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO ROCHESTER EMBAYMENT 'AREA OF CONCERN'

February 23 Meeting to Update Public on Restoration of Area's Natural Resources

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Monroe County Department of Public Health will co-host a [virtual public meeting](#) on **February 23, 2022, from noon to 1 p.m.** to provide an update to the public on ongoing efforts to restore natural resources and to propose removing the Degradation of Aesthetics Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) from the Rochester Embayment Area of Concern (AOC).

"Sustained progress in restoring the Rochester Embayment is critical to eventually delisting this waterway from the Great Lakes Areas of Concern," **DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said.** "Years of steadfast dedication from New York State and our federal and local partners to restore this incredible resource are now bearing fruit. DEC is encouraged by the progress to date and I look forward to continuing this collaborative work to benefit our shared environment."

"Working with many partners, we have made significant progress addressing these serious environmental concerns. This long-term commitment to being better stewards of our natural resources is contributing to a better quality of life for us all," **Dr. Michael Mendoza, Commissioner of Public Health for Monroe County said.**

In 1987, the Rochester Embayment was designated as an AOC by the U.S.-Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, indicating it had experienced environmental degradation. The Rochester Embayment AOC is an area formed by the indentation of the Monroe County shoreline between Bogus Point in the town of Parma and Nine Mile Point in the town of Webster. The southern boundary includes approximately six miles of the Genesee River that is influenced by lake levels, from the river's mouth to the Lower Falls.

The Degradation of Aesthetics BUI was originally designated as impaired due to: accumulation of algae on lake shorelines; presence of litter and sediment in the lower river after storms; objectionable odors from chemical seeps at the Lower Falls; accumulation of dead alewife on lake shorelines; presence of discarded salmonids on river shorelines; and, turbid water quality conditions. Through various mitigation

efforts, monitoring programs and environmental assessments completed in the years since, it has been demonstrated that these conditions no longer exist to the extent that they cause impairment to the aesthetic use of resources within the AOC, and that the BUI designation can be removed.

The Monroe County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) has led an initiative for many years known as the Remedial Action Plan (RAP) process to address the root problems associated with all the identified BUIs. The RAP identified 14 beneficial use impairments for the AOC. Impairments included items such as degradation of fish and wildlife populations, restrictions on dredging, and degradation of aesthetics. Each impairment has associated criteria that must be met for it to be removed from the list. Once the Aesthetics BUI is removed, there will be two additional BUIs remaining: Bird/Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems and Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat.

To participate in this meeting online, click on [this link](#) or go to <https://on.ny.gov/3gl6Spb>. To participate by phone, call 1-518-549-0500 and enter Access Code 161 560 7137 followed by the # sign.

Health and environmental officials are also seeking input on the Degradation of Aesthetics BUI removal effort via e-mail from individuals who may not be able to make it to a meeting but want to stay informed and engaged in the process. A report describing the BUI removal efforts will be made available to the public on the [MCDPH website](#) at <https://www.monroecounty.gov/eh-watershed> for a period of 30 days beginning February 23, 2022. The public will be able to submit comments on the report via email to juliephilipp@monroecounty.gov with the subject "RAP" and a message containing your full name, e-mail address, and town of residence.

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