

## Letter: Sierra Club efforts expand across all of New York State

Aug 8, 2022

**E**rie County Legislator John Mills asserted in *Another Voice* on Aug. 3 that an **Another Voice I wrote recently** was “**penned by a New York City author.**” Apparently he jumped to this conclusion because I signed as Conservation Chair of the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter. While New York City is indeed adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean, the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club covers all of New York State; it was the first Sierra Club chapter outside California, and once included the New England states. I have lived in Erie County for all my adult life except for graduate school and research trips, since attending the University at Buffalo in the 1960s.

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Regardless, it is perfectly acceptable for a person outside Western New York to write an opinion piece on a topic of wide concern. We are one State of New York, the only state fortunate enough to border an ocean and the Great Lakes. Ironically, one of the points I made in my piece was that there are two serious threats to our survival as a democracy and a species: the climate crisis and the tendency of some elected officials to be careless with facts. We in the Sierra Club rely on scientific literature and are always willing to cite our sources.

Wind turbine blades do not deposit microplastics into water bodies. They are made of fiberglass, epoxy and sometimes balsa wood. They are inert, increasingly recyclable, and pose no harm to our drinking water; neither do the structures on which they are mounted. Mapping of the lake bed would avoid areas of significant deposits from past pollution, and lake bed impact would be minimal at most and only during a brief construction period. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority is conducting a comprehensive study to ensure water safety before any wind tower construction would be permitted.

The Erie County ban on microbead pollution, which Mills wisely supported, and which was followed up by a New York State ban, was actually initiated by our local Sierra Club Niagara Group volunteers. We will always strive to protect our lakes, our air and our land from fossil fuel pollution and all other threats.

Ellen Cardone Banks

Conservation Chair, Atlantic Chapter

Sierra Club