

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Office of Internal Audit  
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December 20, 2021

Ms. Heather Pratt  
Audit Manager  
New York State Office of the State Comptroller  
Division of State Government Accountability  
110 State Street – 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Albany, New York 12236

Dear Ms. Pratt:

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has reviewed the Office of the State Comptroller's (OSC) November 19, 2021 follow-up audit report regarding actions taken by DEC to implement recommendations included in OSC's July 2020 *Management of Invasive Species* audit report. The audit found that DEC had been active in establishing programs to address invasive species, but recommended improvements in oversight, monitoring, and communication relating to boat inspections, permits, and early detection and assessment of invasive species.

The follow-up review concluded that DEC made significant progress addressing the recommendations in the initial audit report and of the four, DEC has implemented two and partially implemented two. Implementation actions include boat steward recruitment and training by partner organizations, information sharing with various stakeholder agencies, revising the New York State Watercraft Inspection Steward Handbook, and tracking steward performance statistics. In addition, DEC continues to develop guidance on and complete non-native assessments, increase trap sample testing, and provide iMap training to regional staff.

DEC has and continues to make substantive improvements towards programmatic implementation of OSC's recommendations and remains committed to the Program's success.

Sincerely,



Andrew B. Fischler  
Director, Office of Internal Audit