



Hudson River Sloop Clearwater

724 Wolcott Avenue, Beacon, NY 12508
(845) 265-8080 • FAX (845) 831-2821
www.Clearwater.org

Media Contacts:

Erin Macchiaroli, Communications x7100
Commun@Clearwater.org, (845)265-8080

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 22, 2019

Governor Cuomo Bans Plastic Bags in New York on Earth Day

KINGSTON, NY - At a press conference on Monday, April 22 at Clearwater's Kingston Home Port and Education Center at the Hudson River Maritime Museum, Governor Cuomo announced his signing of legislation banning single use plastic bags in New York State. The Governor made the announcement beside Rondout Creek to an audience of reporters and environmental groups including Clearwater, Riverkeeper, Scenic Hudson and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

Plastic bags have long plagued the Hudson River's ecology, and they are a major contributor to the global ecological crisis posed by plastic pollution in the world's rivers and oceans. Often confused for food by freshwater and marine animals, plastic bags and other plastic debris do not biodegrade. Instead, these materials break down into microscopic pieces of plastic, or "microplastics" that are consumed and bioaccumulate in fish, mammals, and birds throughout the aquatic food chain.

"We are very concerned about the accumulation of microplastics in our waterways and fish," said Erik Fyfe, Education Director for Clearwater. "As part of our education programs, we collect plankton from the river to show our students, and for at least the last five years, whenever we look at the plankton under a microscope we see microplastics in the water."

New York's new plastic bag ban will help reduce the amount of plastic in the Hudson. Additional work is needed to address other common sources of microplastic pollution such as synthetic clothing, cosmetics, cleaning products and air blasting media.

"We pull plastic waste from the Hudson every day during the sailing season, whether we're under way or not. All of it would otherwise break down into microplastics which wind up in the water, in the fish and in anyone that eats the fish." said Clearwater Executive Director Greg Williams. "We're delighted Gov. Cuomo is signing the plastic bag ban bill, and is taking the opportunity to recognize environmental advocacy organizations in the process."

The Hudson River Sloop *Clearwater* has dedicated the last 50 years to preserving, protecting and educating about the health of the Hudson. The Clearwater sailing crew removes trash from the River on their voyages from Albany down to NYC.

About Hudson River Sloop Clearwater

Launched in 1969 by legendary folk singer and activist Pete Seeger, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater has been at the forefront of the environmental movement as champions of the Hudson River. To date, more than half a million people have experienced their first real look at an estuary's ecosystem aboard the

sloop Clearwater. Clearwater has become the grassroots model for producing positive changes to protect our planet. For more information, visit www.clearwater.org.

—

Media Contact:

Erin Macchiaroli ext. 7100

Hudson River Sloop Clearwater

724 Wolcott Avenue, Beacon, NY 12508

www.clearwater.org

P: 845-265-8080 F: 206-350-5680