

Area farmers receive funding to improve lake water quality

ALBANY — Essex County Soil & Water Conservation District will receive nearly \$100,000 to help area farmers reduce the impact agricultural practices have on Lake Champlain's water quality.

The money, recovered from a 2007 case in which a major power company violated the Clean Air Act, will target phosphorus reduction from area farms, improving operations, fighting pollution and improving the health of Lake Champlain.

"A healthy Lake Champlain and a vibrant agricultural sector are both vital to sustaining the Champlain Valley's economy and way of life," said New York state Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman in a press release.

"At no cost to taxpayers, these funds will help area farmers improve their operations while furthering their responsible stewardship of the environment."

The southern segments of Lake Champlain have

been hit especially hard by accelerated weed growth caused by high nutrient levels, including phosphorus.

The Rheinland Farm in Essex County, which produces beef cattle will receive \$19,800 to prevent cattle from grazing and watering in a stream that flows into Lake Champlain by installing fencing and building a stream crossing for the cattle.

A vegetation buffer will be included in the project to filter nutrients, prevent erosion and provide wildlife habitat.

Another \$75,000 will go to the Huestis Family Farm, a 90-cow beef operation in Essex County, to construct a large covering over the barnyard and install other features to reduce runoff from the farm.

Projects designed to reduce agricultural runoff are also targeted for farmers in Washington County.

The Lake Champlain Basin Program will administer funding for the projects.

