

TUG HILL COMMISSION OUTSIDE REGION POLICY

WHEREAS, in 1998 Article 37, §847 of Executive Law was enacted to ensure the continued municipal assistance, conservation, preservation and development in the region by continuing the Tug Hill Commission permanently; and

WHEREAS, the legislature found, in §847, among other things:

- State assistance through the Tug Hill Commission to help Tug Hill local governments and organizations, those located in area the legislation describes as “lying between Lake Ontario, the Black River and Oneida Lake” being “a region of approximately twenty-one hundred square miles that encompasses towns and villages scattered in a vast acreage of forest and farmland”, is merited and needed because of the importance of these resources to the state, and because of the small population and relative poverty of the region,
- The purpose of the commission is to enable local governments, private organizations, and individuals to shape the future of the Tug Hill region, and to demonstrate and communicate ways that this can be done by other rural areas. Commission programs are geared toward the conservation and productive use of the natural resources of the region, strengthening of the long-term economy, employment, cultural and social resources, and the general well-being of the rural communities,
- The commission has facilitated local action as the most enduring and cost-effective method of retaining the rural and remote character of this land, and of retaining the independent way of life of its people and their economy; and

WHEREAS, the legislature established, in §847-c, powers and duties for the Commission. Among them are the power:

- to stimulate action by public and private organizations on region wide issues, problems and opportunities that affect the Tug Hill region, with primary emphasis on possible solutions at the local level,
- to assist local governments and other appropriate state and local organizations to plan and work for a positive future, and to do this, as far as possible, through intermunicipal cooperation and through technical assistance,
- to serve a coordinating role in utilizing the capabilities of other organizations to carry out the duties prescribed in this section; and

WHEREAS, the Tug Hill Commission delivers its services primarily through regional councils of governments (COGs), which currently are the Cooperative Tug Hill Council, the North Shore Council of Governments, the Northern Oneida County Council of Governments, the River Area Council of Governments; and the Salmon Rivers Council of Governments; and

WHEREAS, the Tug Hill Commission's financial and staff resources are finite and currently used to the fullest extent with the fifty-nine (59) towns and villages within the legislatively defined region, and the five (5) additional communities that have joined regional COGs; and

WHEREAS, additional municipalities within the region set out in §847-a of the Commission's enabling legislation have expressed interest in joining COGs;

NOW BE IT RESOLVED

1. As found by the New York State Legislature in the Commission's enabling legislation, municipalities within in the area described in §847-a are of similar nature and share natural resources, particularly watersheds; and
2. With additional financial resources to support the salaries, benefits and associated non-personal expenses for five permanent full time equivalent staff members, the commission would be willing to serve additional communities between the commission's current boundary to the Lake Ontario shoreline, and directly adjacent to the commission's current boundary on the east of the Black River, totaling no more than 16 towns and villages, if those communities request membership and are accepted by a COG.
3. Until such time that additional financial resources are made available, the commission will not be able to provide more than minimal direction and assistance, as currently provided, to any additional outside region communities.

Approved at the December 11, 2023 Tug Hill Commission board meeting.