

Proposal #1: Constitutional Amendment to Article 14

Language on the Ballot

Allows skiing and related trail facilities on state forest preserve land. The site is 1,039 acres. Requires State to add 2,500 acres of new forest land in Adirondack Park.

A yes vote authorizes new ski trails and related facilities in the Adirondack forest preserve.

A no vote does not authorize this use.

What Would This Proposal Do?

The proposed Constitutional Amendment is in effect a land swap that would authorize NYS to use up to 323 of the 1,039 acres in the Complex currently designated as constitutionally protected Forest Preserve for construction, operation and maintenance of Nordic skiing and biathlon trails and a stadium for training and events and related facilities (excluding hotels, swimming pools and zip lines) in exchange for incorporation into the Forest Preserve by NYS of at least 2,500 acres of forest land in the Adirondack Park. The Sport Complex is state-owned and operated; it is managed by the Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA).

PROS

- Will bring the complex into compliance with the Constitution to resolve past violations
- Will provide clarity for permissible future enhancements to the Complex

It will essentially provide the legal basis for work already completed and future necessary improvements to the Complex. Supporters urging voters to vote in favor of this Constitutional Amendment in November include:

- **Protect the Adirondacks, Inc.** (aka PROTECT)
- **The Adirondack Council**

CONS

Previously, efforts were made to stop the proposed amendment to ensure that facilities at the Complex would not further violate the Forever Wild Clause.

Currently no groups are on record opposing this proposed Constitutional Amendment.

Why is this measure on the ballot?

The so-called "Forever Wild " Clause of Article 14, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution reads as follows: "The lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed." The clause was adopted to protect the integrity of New York's Forest Preserve lands.

Protect the Adirondacks, Inc. (aka PROTECT), a regional organization, had substantial involvement in ensuring the constitutional amendment would redress past violations and limit future use to prevent future violations. Past violations include a state-initiated construction of snowmobile trails at the Complex involving clear cutting thousands of trees. In ensuing litigation, the New York Court of Appeals determined that construction of these trails violated the Forever Wild clause and required a constitutional amendment, not administrative decision making.