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April 25, 2024

John M. Burth
Adirondack Park Agency
PO Box 99
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REF: Project 2022-0218; USL Marina, LLC

The Upper Saranac Lake Association (USLA) submits these comments regarding the proposal by USL Marina, LLC (“the Applicant”) to considerably expand the marina on Lower Fish Creek Pond.

The Upper Saranac Lake Association (USLA) represents about 550 members, most of whom own property on the shores of Upper Saranac Lake, Fish Creek ponds and several ponds in the Saranac Inn area. The purposes for which the USLA corporation is organized are: to preserve, enhance and protect the natural beauties and environmental purity of Upper Saranac Lake, its adjoining waters and the adjacent lands and forests; to encourage and assist in improving the recreational enjoyment of these waters and lands without thereby degrading or deteriorating the natural environmental quality thereof, and generally to conserve and protect the interests of owners and tenants of the area embraced within the Upper Saranac Lake watershed. USLA is also actively engaged in improving boater safety and regularly provides boater safety classes. We believe our organization and membership should participate, contribute, and collaborate more effectively to fulfill our purpose.

Our organization has provided comments and input since the day this project was initially submitted for consideration when the Town of Santa Clara filed a moratorium to allow time for their review of the existing Building Code for commercial properties.

It is important to note that USLA has continually expressed support for a marina appropriately sized for its location on the Fish Creek “pond.” There is demand for marina services in the Upper Saranac Lake area that a properly sized marina could service.

Our two major concerns with the proposed Upper Saranac Marina relate to the size of the docks and the effects the proposed 92 boats



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will have on both Fish Creek ponds canal and on Upper Saranac Lake itself. We agree with the concerns addressed in detail within the letter submitted on March 11, 2024, from “Protect The Adirondacks.” Specifically, we believe a boat traffic study of Fish Creek Ponds, Upper Saranac Lake and the canal that connects the two bodies of water is critical. Even the APA letter to the applicant dated August 23, 2023, states: *“Provide a boat traffic assessment discussing the additional boat traffic that will result from expansion of this existing marina. The assessment should quantify the number of additional boats in relation to existing use of the lake with emphasis on the increase in boat traffic to and from the main body of the lake through the Fish Creek channel. The assessment should also discuss how the reconfiguration of the docks at the marina will affect boat traffic in the channel and whether that will affect safe navigation for other boaters.”* We have not seen any study results to date and cannot believe one could effectively be conducted until this summer boating season.

The marina as proposed is too big for the water body it sits on. The extension of the docks up to 200 feet from shore will impact the boat traffic that passes by the marina. The proposed ninety-two boat slips are a huge increase over the existing usable number – claimed at 71 by the applicant. Since the prior business rented mainly canoes, the existing slips were designed for that purpose. Power boats use a lot more space, so 71 power boats is not an accurate number as claimed by the owner. Looking at the marina in pictures from this past summer, they seem to struggle to dock more than about 15 pontoon boats using up to half the current space. Again, the APA letter of August 23, 2023, asked the same question: *“The application materials indicate that there is a current total capacity of 71 boats. However, the layout shown does not seem to reflect actual use. Please provide the approximate number of boats that have been docked at your facility each year for the past five years, including how you calculated these numbers.”* We do not think 71 existing powerboat spaces is close to reality, making the requested 92 spaces a huge increase.

USLA hopes that our position is not viewed as opposing development and progress but rather as collaborating as a stakeholder in enhancing and maintaining the wilderness character and pristine waters for future generations. It is essential that our business, residential, and State-owned facilities coexist within our Adirondack community and maintain the delicate balance necessary for all to positively exist.



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Thank you for considering our input and the opportunity to participate.

Regards,

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President, USLA

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CC: USLA Governmental Affairs Committee