



Board of Chosen Freeholders

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
PO Box 2900
Flemington, NJ 08822-2900

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: John E. Lanza, Freeholder

John.lanza@co.hunterdon.nj.us

Hunterdon Freeholders Successful In Gaining Black Fly Spraying This Year

The Pennsylvania DEP (PADEP) began aerial black fly spraying along both sides of the Delaware River on April 23, treating areas that cover the entire Hunterdon County border, as a result of financial support from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Freeholder John E. Lanza, the Hunterdon Board's Parks liaison, has reported.

"The Freeholders and our residents are most appreciative that the NJDEP has stepped up and provided to the PADEP the state's share for the cost of this important public health program that suppresses black flies in the area, after not doing so last year," Lanza said.

Last July, when the PADEP notified the County that spraying along the New Jersey portion of the Delaware River was suspended due to New Jersey not funding its share of the costs, Hunterdon County's Freeholders provided funding for one spraying along the Hunterdon side of the river in August.

Lanza stated, "Black flies are detrimental to residents, businesses and tourism in the County. The Freeholders believe the black fly suppression along the Delaware River is so important to the quality of life for our residents that county funding was put forward for the program in 2019.

Following discussions with NJDEP, with the support of Senator Mike Doherty, the County received assurances that New Jersey would support the program in 2020. We are thankful NJDEP has kept its word."

"Even though people are presently not allowed in our parks and most tourism programs are suspended under the Governor's COVID-19 directives, we anticipate those orders to eventually be lifted at some point. I am advised that spraying now, helps to prevent infestation in the summer," Lanza continued.

According to the PADEP, Vectobac 12AS, a naturally occurring, non-chemical, bacteria called Bti, is dispersed by helicopter over the river several times during the spring and summer. Bti stands for *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *israelensis*, a bacterial larvicide, not a chemical, and is the only product used in Pennsylvania's waterways for black fly suppression.



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“In 2015 when all spraying ceased on both sides of the Delaware due to a lack of funding, Hunterdon County’s Freeholders worked with local legislators, the County’s Health Department, and Warren County Freeholders for several years to have the black fly suppression cost sharing reinstated with Pennsylvania. The program was resumed in 2018. There was significant concern when New Jersey stopped supporting the program last year.

It is great to have this is program that protects our quality of life back on track for our residents,” Lanza concluded.