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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Another skunk tests positive for rabies in Essex County

Elizabethtown, NY. A skunk displaying signs of rabies tested positive for the virus yesterday, August 6. The skunk was terminated the day before after acting aggressively and threatening livestock in Willsboro. The Essex County Health Department (ECHD) agreed to submit the animal for testing, while working to determine if any exposures to people, pets, or livestock occurred. The Adirondack Veterinary Hospital prepared the skunk for shipment to the Wadsworth Laboratory and the lab confirmed the positive result.

After evaluating potential interactions, ECHD determined that there were no exposures and no further risk to the public. This is the fourth positive case of rabies in 2025, with another skunk in Elizabethtown testing positive just last week. A woodchuck submitted from Ticonderoga in late June and a raccoon recovered from Westport area in early May also tested positive.

"This is a good time to reiterate that a second round of rabies bait drops are set to begin this week, from August 6 -12, using fixed wing aircraft," said Linda Beers, Director of Public Health for the ECHD. "These bait drops are being studied to determine how effective they are in controlling rabies in raccoons and skunks".

Oral Rabies Vaccination (ORV) baiting with ONRAB vaccine is part of an ongoing field trial of the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) that began in West Virginia in 2011 and expanded to other strategic areas in Ohio, New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire between 2012-2020. Other rabies vaccination trials have been conducted in New York since 1995. "APHIS' Wildlife Services program works cooperatively with state and local partners to help reduce rabies in wildlife," explained Beers. "This week's drop will distribute 37,000 baits across Clinton and Essex Counties, with the northeastern portion of Essex County targeted".

If you find a bait:

- Leave it undisturbed where you found it unless it is on your lawn, driveway, or other area unlikely to attract raccoons or other wildlife.
- Wear gloves if you move the bait to an area of thicker cover.



- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after contact with baits.
- Intact baits pose no risk.
- The baits have been shown to be safe in over 60 different species of animals, including domestic dogs and cats and pose no health risk if accidentally consumed.

More information about rabies prevention can be viewed on the ECHD website at:

<https://essexcountyny.gov/Health/communicable-disease-control/rabies-center/>

To learn more about rabies bait drops, go to: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/national-wildlife-programs/rabies>

The next free opportunity to vaccinate your pets is Tuesday, August 19th from 6-7:30 PM at the Lake Placid Horse Show Grounds.

To view the full 2025 Rabies Clinic Schedule and register your pets, go to
<https://essexcountyny.gov/Health/>.

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