The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Steven Seagal Vows to Get Tough on Lake Baikal Pollution

September 11, 2020



Lake Baikal has been plagued with environmental problems caused by industrial pollution, mining and agricultural run-off in recent decades. **Pixabay**

Hollywood actor and naturalized Russian citizen Steven Seagal is spearheading a campaign to protect Lake Baikal from pollution amid regional elections currently taking place in many regions.

Seagal, 68, is known to support nationalist author Zakhar Prilepin's For Truth party, whose platform includes criminalizing pollution.

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Seagal announced plans Friday to push for a law that would criminalize dumping chemicals, oil products, garbage and other waste into Lake Baikal, the state-run TASS news agency reported.

“Our goal is to use mass media to convey this message not only to people who live in the Baikal region but also to the world community,” Seagal said.

Lake Baikal, the world’s largest freshwater lake, has been plagued with environmental problems caused by industrial pollution, mining and agricultural run-off in recent decades.

Seagal’s efforts come in the wake of a controversial law that allows clearcutting and construction near Lake Baikal’s shores to build or upgrade transport infrastructure through 2024. The law also suspends requirements for state environmental impact evaluations ahead of transport construction and modernization projects.

Activists railed against law, saying it threatens protected natural areas.

For Truth is among several political parties established this and last year ahead of this weekend’s regional elections and the 2021 national legislative elections. Candidates from the party are currently running for seats in 11 regional legislatures and one city legislature in Russia's Sept. 13 elections.

Political pundits have linked the appearance of new political parties to Kremlin efforts to dilute the opposition and fend off feasible challengers in the upcoming elections.

Seagal, who obtained a Russian passport in 2016, has expressed interest in a governor’s seat in Far East Russia in the past. He was appointed Moscow’s envoy for Russian-U.S. humanitarian ties in 2018.

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