

Friends of New York's Environment

Protecting our land, air and water

February 22, 2007

Eliot Spitzer, Governor
Executive Chamber
State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Joseph L. Bruno, President Pro Tem & Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Legislative Office Building, Room 909
Albany, NY 12247

Sheldon Silver, Speaker
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Governor Spitzer, Majority Leader Bruno and Speaker Silver:

On behalf of the more than 200 organizations and more than 4 million members of groups belonging to the *Friends of New York's Environment* coalition, we are writing to express our appreciation for the positive environmental proposals contained in this year's executive budget proposal. These proposals represent a good step forward and an opportunity to significantly improve environmental protection and the preservation of New York's natural and community resources. We also thank the Senate and Assembly for their past support of increases to the Environmental Protection Fund and especially for the progress realized last year.

Individually and collectively, the environmental, health, agricultural, recreational and urban, suburban, coastal and rural stakeholder groups and coalitions signed below urge each of you, the full Senate and Assembly and the Executive team, to work together to ensure that the final 2007-2008 budget includes:

- **An updated Bottle Bill and real progress towards an Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) that expands to \$500 million by 2010.** Clean, healthy communities and well funded environmental community and agricultural programs depend on this.
- **Restoration of 200 plus environmental staffing positions** across multiple agencies to make sure that the State has the capacity and the skilled and committed employees for priority programs, enforcement of environmental laws and policies, and disbursement of EPF funds.
- **Increased incentives for local open space conservation, and continued consideration of a future state-wide clean water, environmental and parks bond act** to further advance protection of our land, air and water, before it's too late.

As you well know, New York's EPF, which was first established in 1993, is a unique and visionary approach to environmental protection. With its pay-as-you-go reliance on dedicated resources, traditionally from Real Estate Transfer revenue, the EPF has served the citizens of New York for more than a decade as a reliable, cost-effective source of \$1.5 billion in environmental funding. Although it does not meet all of the state's pressing conservation and resource protection needs, it provides a solid foundation for moving forward.

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Reasons to update the Bottle Bill and expand dedicated environmental funding:

Our organizations have remained united for over seven years in the belief that a growing EPF benefits all of the State's constituents. Raising the EPF by a minimum \$100 million over the next two years as proposed in the Executive Budget means that there will be more money available in New York to protect farmland and open space, help the fight to protect our air, water and ocean resources, increase community education about the importance of pollution prevention and recycling, and expand recycling. And this is just a portion of what could be accomplished. The expanded fund also provides an opportunity to increase support for urban forestry, state land stewardship, smart growth, historic sites, local parks, fish and wildlife and zoos, botanical gardens and aquaria, together with other EPF programs. Cities, neglected urban areas and underserved communities need their fair share of environmental help too. Together you can also establish a new fund for diesel retrofits and cleanup and improve the availability of EPF dollars to smaller community based non-profit organizations.

Today the Friends of New York's Environment coalition not only thanks the Executive for a good budget plan, and thanks the Assembly for past support of updates to the Bottle Bill, but renews its support of the bottle bill update. We are united in our belief that including non-carbonated beverages such as bottled water and Snapple-type drinks in what is already the state's most successful litter and waste reduction program, is the important next step we can all take to promote clean communities and environmental protection. Beverage companies in New York are currently keeping unclaimed deposits from bottles and cans that are not returned. In other states, including Massachusetts, Maine, Michigan, Hawaii and California, unclaimed bottle deposits go to the state to benefit the public. It is truly a win-win situation when we can work together to reduce the stream of waste flowing into New York's landfills, improve the quality of life in our communities by reducing litter, and generate dedicated revenue for the environment by returning the unclaimed nickel deposits to the EPF.

Organizations and coalitions signed below have already begun to work in support of the executive budget proposal, sometimes with proposed amendments and enhancements. We have begun to hold citizen lobby days representing many of the constituencies that benefit from EPF funding. We will be telling Senate and Assembly representatives and partners what we support in this plan and urge development of a final budget agreement that addresses our individual and collective priorities.

We look forward to working with the Executive and Legislature to achieve the goal of an updated bottle bill, an EPF that expands to \$500 million by 2010, restoration of critical environmental staff, and increased incentives for local open space conservation in this budget. Although that will not allow us to respond to all the state's unmet environmental protection needs, it will continue moving us forward in the direction this executive budget proposal sets. We look forward to partnering with each of you as this budget is developed and implemented.

Sincerely,

Friends of NY's Environment

See attached list of organizations and coalitions

CC: Paul Francis, Judith Enck, Steve Mitnick, Carol Ash, Pete Grannis, Pat Hooker
Senators Johnson and Marcellino, Assemblyperson Farrell
Senate Minority Leader Malcolm A. Smith and Assembly Minority Leader James Tedisco.

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1 in 9: The Long Island Breast Cancer Action Coalition
Adirondack Council, Brian Houseal, Executive Director
Adirondack Land Trust, Michael Carr, Executive Director
Adirondack Mountain Club, Neil F. Woodworth, Executive Director
Alley Pond Environmental Center, Irene V. Scheid
Alliance for Clean Energy New York, Carol E. Murphy, Executive Director
American Farmland Trust, David Haight, New York State Director
American Littoral Society, Northeast Chapter, Don Riepe, Director
American Lung Association of New York State, Inc., Peter Iwanowicz, Vice President
Appalachian Mountain Club, Andrew J. Falander, Executive Director
Arbor Hill Environmental Justice Corp., Aaron Mair, Founder
Agricultural Stewardship Association, Teri Ptacek, Executive Director
Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, David Gibson, Executive Director
Aquarium of Niagara, Gay Molnar, Director of Development
Audubon New York, David J. Miller, Executive Director
Bayport Civic Association, Bob Draffin, President
Bellport Beach Property Owners Association. Margaret Bermel, President
Brentwood/Bay Shore Breast Cancer Coalition
Bridgewater National Bank, Thomas J. Tobin
Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Lois Carswell, Chairman Emeritus
Brooklyn Greenway Initiative, Milton Puryear, Director of Planning
Buffalo Audubon Society Inc., Bill Hudson, Executive Director
Buffalo Zoo, Donna Fernandes, Ph.D., President/CEO
Center for Energy and the Environment at New York Institute of Technology, Sarah Meyland
Citizens Action Committee West (CAC West), Hank Beck
Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director
Citizens' Environmental Coalition, Steve Breymna, Ph.D., Executive Director
Clean New York, Kathy Curtis, Policy Director
Coalition of Living Museums, including over 100 individual organizations
Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor, Dana Hoffman
Coalition to Save the Woods, Mary Ann Johnston
Columbia Land Conservancy, Peter R. Paden, Executive Director
Concerned Residents of Southeast, Rick Feuerman, President
Conservation Alliance of New York, Inc., David Miller, Chairman
Container Recycling Institute, Pat Franklin, Executive Director, Jennifer Gitlitz Research Director
Community Health and Environment Coalition
Concerned Citizens of Montauk
Concerned Residents of North Salem, Amy Rosmarin, Director
Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Scott Sutcliffe
Delaware Highlands Conservancy, Sue Currier, Executive Director
Ducks Unlimited, John A. Cushman II, State Chairman
Dutchess Land Conservancy, Becky Thornton, President
East End Forever
East Hampton Trails Preservation Society
Eastern Long Island Audubon Society, Eileen Schwinn, President
Environmental Advocates of New York, Rob Moore, Executive Director
Environmental Defense, Jim Tripp, General Counsel
Federated Conservationists of Westchester County, Herb Fox, President
Federation of NY Solid Waste Associations, Meg Morris, Federation Chairman
Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, Scott Ingmire, Chair
Finger Lakes Land Trust, Andy Zepp, Executive Director
Four Harbors Audubon Society
Friends of Brooklyn Park, Harry J. Bubbins, Director
Friends of Hempstead Plains, Betsy Gulotta
Friends of the Long Island Greenbelt, Sandi Ferguson
Friends of the Bay, Kyle Rabin

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Friends of Hudson River Park, Albert K. Butzel, President
Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge
Greenburgh Nature Center, William Lawyer, Executive Director
Greene County Soil & Water Conservation District, Rene VanSchaack, Executive Director
Genesee Land Trust, Gay Mills, Executive Director
Great South Bay Audubon Society, Linda Grant
Green Point of New York, Inc., John L. Iurka
Group for the South Fork, Robert S. DeLuca, President
Highlands Coalition, Tom Gilbert, Acting Chair
Hiking Long Island, Ken Kinder
Hudson Highlands Land Trust, Andrew T. Chmar, Executive Director
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Greg Swanzey, Executive Director
Invasive Plants Council of New York, Steve Clements, Director
Izaak Walton League of America, New York Division, Les Monostory, President
Lake George Land Conservancy, Nancy Williams, Director
Land Trust Alliance, Lynn Schumann, North East Director
League of Women Voters of New York
Long Island Drinking Water Coalition, Joe Lorintz
Long Island Environmental Voters Forum, Richard Johannesen, Board Chairman
Long Island Farm Bureau, Joseph Gergela, Executive Director
Long Island Greenbelt Trails Conference
Long Island Neighborhood Network, Lewis Neal
Long Island Pine Barrens Society, Richard Amper, Executive Director
Long Island Invasive Species Management Area (LIWMA), Kathy Schwager, Director
Manitoga, Inc., Kitty McCullough, Executive Director
Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, Jill Knapp, Executive Director
Mohonk Preserve, Glenn Hoagland, Executive Director
Mountain Top Arboretum, Joan Kutcher, Executive Director
Nassau Land Trust, Kathleen Kleinman, Director
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Richard Schrader, Legislative Director
New York Botanical Garden, Rosemary Ginty, Vice President for Government & Community Relations
New York Chapter, Solid Waste Association of North America
New York City Audubon, E. J. McAdams, Executive Director
New York City Soil & Water Conservation District, Eugenia M. Flatow, Chair
New York Conservation Council, Harold L. Palmer, President
New Yorkers for Parks, Christian DiPalermo, Executive Director
New York Farm Bureau, John Lincoln, President
New York Flora Association, Troy Weldy, Director
New York League of Conservation Voters, Marcia Bystryn, Executive Director
New York – New Jersey Trail Conference, Edward Goodell, Executive Director
New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), Laura Haight, Senior Environmental Associate
New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse and Recycling, Jeff Cooper, President
New York State Association for Solid Waste Management
New York State Urban and Community Forestry Council, Patricia Tobin, President
North Fork Audubon Society, Maureen Cullinane, President
North Fork Environmental Council, Gwynn Schroeder, Executive Director
North Shore Audubon Society, Jennifer Wilson-Pines
North Shore Land Alliance, Lisa W. Ott, President
NY Trout Unlimited, Ron Urban, Council Chairman
Open Space Council, Marilyn England
Open Space Institute, Joe Martens, President
Open Space Preservation Trust
Operation SPLASH (Stop Pollution, Littering and Save Harbors), Rob Weltner
Orange County Land Trust, James Delaune, Executive Director
Palisades Interstate Park Commission, Jim Hall, Executive Director

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Parks and Trails New York, Robin Dropkin, Executive Director
Peconic Baykeeper
Peconic Land Trust, John Halsey, President
people's Environmental Network of New York (pENNY), Vicki Baker, Chair
Port Washington Parks Conservancy, Myron Blumenfeld, Chairman
Queens Botanical Garden, Susan Lacerte, Executive Director
Regional Plan Association, Robert Pirani, Director Environmental Programs
Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks, Peter Bauer, Executive Director
Residents for a More Beautiful Port Washington, Jennifer Rimmer
Riverkeeper, Inc. Alex Matthiessen, President & Hudson Riverkeeper
Saratoga P.L.A.N., Alane Ball Chinian, Executive Director
Save The Pine Bush, Lynn Jackson
Save Open Space Now 2000, Alex Wipf
Scenic Hudson, Ned Sullivan, President
Serpentine Art and Nature Commons, Inc., George Y. Bramwell, Esq., President
Shoreham Civic Organization, Mary Daum
Sierra Club – Atlantic Chapter, John Stouffer, Legislative Director
Solid Waste Association of North America
Southampton Baymen's Association, Ian Burliuk, President
Southampton Trails Preservation Society
South Shore Audubon Society, Michael Sperling, President
Staten Island Zoo, John Caltabiano, Director
Sterling Forest Partnership, Mary Yrizarry Chair
Suffolk County Water Authority, Steve Jones
Sustainable Long Island, Sara Lansdale
Sweetbriar Nature Center, Marie J. Smith, Executive Director
Tanglewood Nature Center and Museum, Valerie Heywood, Curator
Teatown Lake Reservation, Fred W. Koontx, Ph.D., Executive Director
The Binghamton Zoo at Ross Park, Mike Janis, Executive Director
The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, Tom Alworth, Executive Director
The Garden Conservancy, Louise Jensen, Associate Director of Preservation
The Nature Conservancy, Henry Tepper, State Director
The Trust for Public Land, Rose Harvey, Regional Director
Thousand Islands Land Trust, Aaron Vogel, Executive Director
Three Village Community Trust, Cynthia Barnes, President
Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, Linda M. Garrett, Executive Director
Utica Zoo, Elizabeth Irons, Executive Director
Vision Long Island, Eric Alexander
Wading River Civic Association, Sid Bail
Wallkill Valley Land Trust, Christopher Duncan, Executive Director
Warwick Smart Growth Alliance, Andrew McLaughlin
Wave Hill, Kate French, Director
Westchester Land Trust, Paul Gallay, Executive Director
West Branch Conservation Association, Martus Granirer, Executive Director
West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc. (WE ACT), Peggy Shepard, Executive Director
West Islip Breast Cancer Coalition
W. Hayward Burns Environmental Education Center, Ken Watson, Director of Urban Environmental Programs
Wildlife Conservation Society, John F. Calvelli, Senior Vice President
Woodstock Land Conservancy, Michael DeWan, President & John Winter, Executive Director