



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Betty Little

Little asks DEC Commissioner to rescind state land property tax cap proposal

BETTY LITTLE January 12, 2009

At an environmental budget hearing today in Albany, State Senator Betty Little asked Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Alexander “Pete” Grannis to rescind an executive budget proposal that would freeze state property tax payments on Forest Preserve Lands.

The budget proposal has drawn criticism from a broad coalition of local and state elected officials, environmentalists and business groups. Earlier this month, Senator Little and three other state senators representing portions of the Adirondack Park sent a letter to Governor David A. Paterson asking him to withdraw the proposal.

“This is a bad idea and would set a terrible precedent,” said Little. “The State has an obligation to pay these taxes on behalf of all New Yorkers who benefit because an Adirondack Park exists. Everyone recognizes the severity of the state’s fiscal crisis, but this proposal isn’t calling for a shared sacrifice. It’s calling for an unfair sacrifice to be made by Adirondack private property owners, many of whom are struggling to make ends meet.”

Little explained that capping payments on the approximately 3 million acres of state lands in the Adirondack Park would unfairly shift the tax burden to private residents and could have devastating economic impacts on many communities, particularly those with a high

percentage of state lands and small population.

Today marks the beginning of the Legislature's joint budget hearing process. Little notes that the administration is still within the 30-day budget amendment period and could act immediately to eliminate the proposal and assuage the uncertainty and fear this initiative has created.