



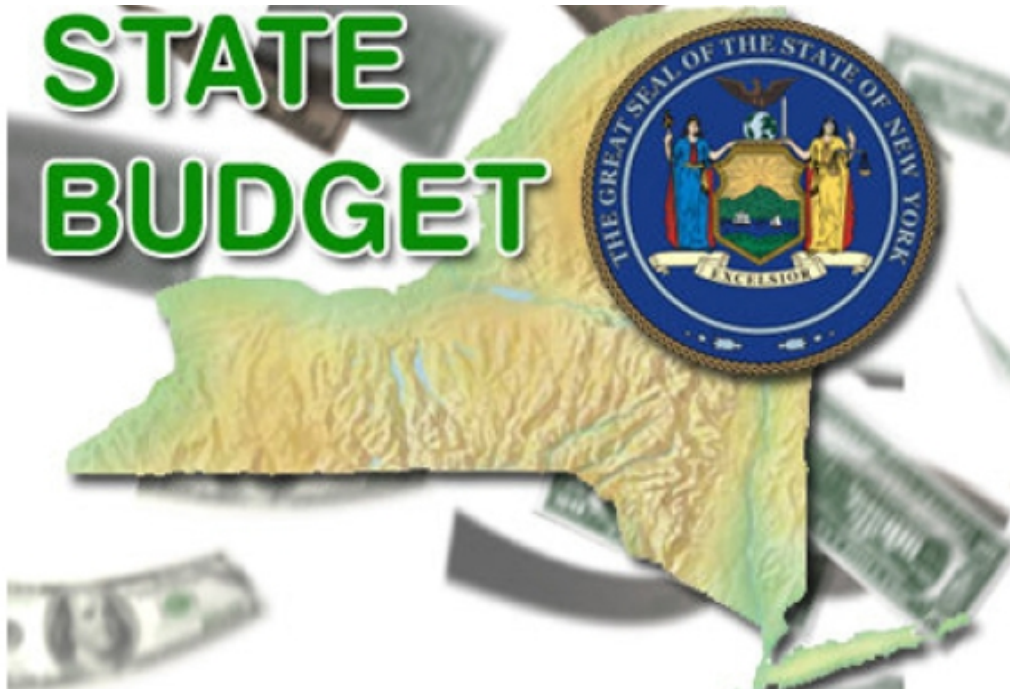
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Parks Still Targeted Despite Warnings to Keep Parks Open

CATHARINE YOUNG April 8, 2010

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ALBANY – Despite stern warnings by federal officials to keep state parks open or face losing significant federal funding for park projects, Governor Paterson is moving ahead with his plan to close and cut programming and services at state parks, including Allegany State Park and Long Point State Park, according to Senator Catharine Young (R,I,C – Olean).

On March 31, federal officials from the National Parks Service sent a letter to the Governor warning him that his proposed closure of 55 state parks and historic sites and curtailing services at an additional 22 would put New York in “non-compliance” with the requirements attached to funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, possibly resulting in the loss of federal funding for parks or other areas.

Most of the state's parks, including Allegany State Park and Long Point State Park, have received grants from this fund in the past and the federal law governing the grants contains strong protections to assure that project sites remain used as intended.

Senator Young said that Carol Ash, Commissioner of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, indicated on Thursday that, despite the federal governments

cautions, the agency will still go forward with the Governor's plans because no state budget has been finalized.

"The need to pass a budget is paramount. Not only is the future of our parks in limbo, but major construction projects are being held up. Our schools and hospitals need to know their funding levels. New York City-controlled Senators and Assembly members continue to flout the law by holding secret negotiations and refusing to pass the budget," said Senator Young.

Senator Young also is concerned that the Democratic leadership in the Senate is getting ready to once again sock taxpayers with more than \$8.2 billion in tax increases on individuals, families, businesses and consumers, despite promises not to raise any taxes this year.

"The tax new hikes are being pushed by the same people who forced through \$8.5 billion in tax increases last year to pay for out-of-control government spending. Higher taxes will hammer our small businesses and cost thousands of jobs on top of what already has been lost," said Senator Young.

"Rather than cutting Medicaid spending, state bureaucracy and wasteful government programs that were added last year, they are proposing to raise taxes again. It is the worst thing they could do," she added.

Senator Young has called for open conference committees, as required by law, to push the budget process along.

"The budget must be passed immediately. We need actions and results," she said.

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