



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

Bill to Protect Allegany State Parkland Passes New York State Senate

JOSÉ M. SERRANO June 24, 2010

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Albany, NY- Legislation (S8011A), sponsored by Senator José M. Serrano (D-Manhattan/Bronx), which will help to avoid any possible adverse impact of private oil and gas extraction in Allegany State Park passed the New York State Senate today. The bill was strongly supported by Senator Catharine Young (R,I,C-Olean), in whose district Allegany State Park is located.

Portions of oil and gas resources in Allegany State Park were retained in private ownership prior to the creation of the park, and recently the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation has received inquiries from oil and gas companies asserting that they have acquired deeds for the privately owned resources that lie under state-owned surface lands.

The bill specifies the terms and requirements for surface access permits to entities proposing to extract gas and oil within Allegany State Park.

"When it comes to our environment, we must do our due diligence to implement oversight. If drilling is to be conducted in Allegany State Park, it should be done in a secure fashion that will not negatively impact the park's recreational and scenic resources, or its surrounding areas. We owe it to current and future generations to ensure that they will always have the opportunity to enjoy this magnificent park in its full splendor," said Senator Serrano, who serves as Chair of the Senate Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation.

"Allegany State Park is a breathtaking and irreplaceable attraction that has drawn millions of visitors because of its natural beauty. Countless families have built wonderful memories there. The park pumps much-needed revenue into our local economy, and it provides affordable recreational opportunities that improve our quality of life. Protecting the park is an urgent priority," said Senator Catharine Young. "I am glad to work with Senator Serrano, and thank him for his dedication to our State Parks," she said.

The bill stipulates that a surface access permit must be issued by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in order to extract privately owned oil or gas from beneath Allegany State Park, and requires a thorough screening process for applicants, who must submit detailed reports on how the proposed drilling could affect the park and its vicinities. In order to minimize the impact on park resources, the legislation limits the amount of wells permitted. It also requires that the potential permit holder have sufficient financial security to restore the natural conditions of the site after the conclusion of extraction activities.