



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

## Statement by Senator John Bonacic: on the \$2.6 Million Proposed Fine by the NYS Dec Against the Nyc Dep

JOHN J. BONACIC March 29, 2011

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**March 29, 2011** The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has historically forsaken the residents in the New York City Ashokan Watershed and violated National Clean Water Act standards. In addition, ineffective leadership in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has contributed to the continued destruction of upstate communities. This willful disregard for the environmental needs of the Ashokan Watershed communities has impacted their local economies; including the tourism, recreation and agriculture industries.

The Ashokan Watershed communities have dealt with lost revenue due to private septic system damage, erosion of stream banks and backyards, contamination of farmland, cancelled recreational activities and events on the Esopus Creek, changing flood levels for the creek, impeding fish from spawning and creating a hazard in the Hudson River that damaged municipal water systems.

The DEC has finally held NYC accountable for its actions in seeking a \$2.6 million fine following a four month fiasco that resulted in 40 billion gallons of reddish, silt-laden water being dumped into the Lower Esopus Creek. The DEP was allowed to cause more harm and violate more regulations than any local homeowner. It is time to ensure this wrong is righted directly in the communities most affected.

Rather than see this fine be levied and lost in the general environmental budget, these funds need to be returned to the Ashokan Watershed communities. I urge the Department of Environmental Conservation to turn over any receipts from their proposed \$2.6 million fine to the County of Ulster for tourism, recreation, and agricultural industry activity.