



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Griffo Reports that Restoration of Tug Hill Commission in Final Budget

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO April 6, 2011

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### **Griffo Reports Restoration of Tug Hill Commission in Final Budget Agreement**

Senator Confident that Review of Commission will confirm its continued need

(Albany) – State Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R-C-IP, Rome) confirmed that the New York State Tug Hill Commission’s budget was restored in final Budget agreement passed last week. The

Commission's \$1.2 million dollar budget was initially eliminated and its charter dissolved, as part of Governor Cuomo's original budget proposal.

The State Tug Hill Commission The Tug Hill Commission is a state funded, regional agency overseen by a board of nine unpaid commissioners - two each from Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, and Oswego counties, and one at-large, serves Lewis, Oneida, Jefferson and Oswego Counties.

"The Governor's Budget analysts incorrectly targeted a program that was a proven investment for the people of central and northern New York," said Senator Griffo. "The Tug Hill Commission had already distinguished itself as being a boon to local municipalities who relied on the Commission's small professional staff to do work on their behalf, in effect, saving money by not having to hire outside contractors or additional workers."

Senator Griffo, along with a bi-partisan delegation of members that included Senator Patty Ritchie, Assemblymembers RoAnn Destito, Will Barclay, Claudia Tenney and Ken Blankenbush, asked the Governor to restore the funding of the Commission and requested that it be included among the other state commissions being reviewed by the Governor, under his newly-created downsizing commission - Spending and Government Efficiency (SAGE).

"Whether the issue had to do with natural resource concerns, governmental training, Geographic Information Systems / mapping management, or land use and community economic development, dozens of municipal governments were able to work and provide for their residents because they had the Commission available to help fill in the gaps," Griffo added. "I'm pleased that we were able to restore more than 90% of its funding. We're also

very confident that once the Commission is reviewed by the SAGE commission, they'll share our opinion of its value."

Tug Hill Commission Member Arnie Talgo (Steuben - Oneida County) praised the leadership of Senator Joe Griffo in working with his fellow Senator Patty Ritchie and with leadership in the Senate and Assembly on restoring funding for the Tug Hill Commission. "Senator Griffo sought what the Tug Hill Commissioners were asking for in treating the Tug Hill Commission just like the other 199 independent agencies, task forces and commissions - cutting the Commission's budget by 10% and subjecting them to the transparent and fair review of the State Agency and Government Efficiency Commission?," said Talgo. "We thank Senator Griffo for his efforts on this restoration and equitable treatment" he added.

"The Northern Oneida County towns and villages want to recognize Senator Griffo for his leadership and efforts in restoring funding for the Tug Hill Commission," said Northern Oneida County Council of Governments (NOCCOG) chairman Robert Sauer (Camden, Oneida County). "NOCCOG together with four other Tug Hill Councils of Governments, all 4 Tug Hill County Legislatures and 58 Tug Hill towns and villages called for the 'fair treatment' of the Tug Hill Commission in the 2011-12 budget," said Sauer. Our entire State legislative delegation worked with their leadership and Governor Cuomo on an outcome that is both fair and right for the Tug Hill region," added Sauer.

Martinsburg Supervisor Terry Thisse (Lewis County) noted that "Tug Hill communities depend on the services of the Tug Hill Commission to leverage the intergovernmental efforts of the region's towns and villages to protect critical resources such as the Black River and to leverage community development benefits that are dependent upon the region's natural resources." "This river is the lifeblood of our communities and without the assistance of the

Commission the 37 communities that border the river would not accomplish the collaboration and partnerships that are necessary to benefit the region's resources and economy," said Thisse. "The work along the Black River, along with the benefits from agriculture, recreation, forestry and improved government efficiency that the Commission helps our towns and villages with, all demonstrate why the region and the Tug Hill Commission are valuable and important to our communities and New York State," Thisse said.