



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

Budget Statement from Senator Serrano on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation.

JOSÉ M. SERRANO March 30, 2012

"As Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation, I am thrilled that my colleagues and I, under the leadership of Governor Cuomo, have worked out a plan that adequately funds these proven economic engines.

"We voted on a budget that maintains current levels of operational funding for State Parks and the NY Works fund will provide \$89 million in additional funding to rehabilitate these worthwhile facilities.

"This represents the largest infusion of capital money for parks in the history of New York. Particularly after the unpredictable storm weather we experienced last year, 83 percent of parks are in a state of deterioration. Projects in each region of the state will be funded, and 48 State parks and Historic Sites that serve 37 million annual visitors will be improved. Parks are an often times overlooked economic engine. An investment in New York State's parks is an investment in the fiscal health of our State.

"The New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) received an increase in funding from last year's budget, with \$33.4 million for grant making activity. In years past, NYSCA has endured painful cuts that affected cultural organizations throughout the State. In 2009, I directed

\$250,000 of discretionary funding to NYSCA to offset potential cuts to important programs and institutions. The arts have revitalized neighborhoods throughout New York and, in many ways, represent our diverse cultural identity. As a result, when arts institutions thrive, all New Yorkers are positively impacted.

"Our Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquariums (also known as Living Museums) will still receive \$9 million. Their attractions must often be fed, watered and cared for, and they provide countless jobs to members of our communities. I am extremely pleased that they are not receiving cuts in this year's budget.

"\$3 million were allocated to regional tourism marketing. New York is the place to experience some of the best parks, lakes, beaches and tourist sites in the country, and funding for tourism marketing will help spread the word on what our state has to offer, and will help move our tourism economy forward.

"I commend the Governor and my Senate and Assembly colleagues for recognizing the importance of parks and cultural organizations. These proven economic engines will provide a worthwhile return on our state's investment."