



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senate Budget: 2014-2015 Budget Bolsters EPF, Invests in State Parks and Helps Improve Environmental Infrastructure

MARK GRISANTI March 31, 2014

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The New York State Senate today passed a 2014-15 state budget that helps protect and enhance New York's natural resources and invests in key environmental initiatives that create jobs, increase tourism, and benefit communities throughout the state. The budget includes a \$9 million increase to the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), bringing the total to \$162

million, while also making significant investments in improvements to state park facilities and environmental infrastructure.

Senator Mark Grisanti (R-I, North Buffalo), Chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, said, “Increasing the EPF makes a difference in the everyday lives of citizens throughout New York. I am pleased that we were able to secure an increase of \$9 million from where the EPF stood this time last year. The EPF is our cornerstone environmental capital program here in New York, and brings a return of investment of seven-to-one. This additional funding will be used for things from providing funding for our zoos and museums, to working to increase recycling efforts, to preserving open space, and assisting our farmers. With this budget, our state’s communities will be cleaner, healthier, and the public will have even more opportunities to explore and enjoy our abundant natural resources.”

Senator Betty Little (R-C-I, Queensbury), Chair of the Senate’s Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation Committee, said, “New York’s state parks and historic sites enhance our communities through recreational opportunities and cultural significance. This new budget provides necessary funding to restore and repair these important facilities so that they can continue to warmly welcome new visitors for years to come.”

The increase in the EPF will boost funding for important capital projects that protect the environment and enhance communities. The EPF helps protect open spaces; restore historic sites; conserve farmland; restore habitat; control invasive species; improve water quality; and create and enhance parks, among other projects.

The budget also includes two important investments from the NY Works program, which provides billions of dollars to rebuild the state’s roads, bridges, parks, and other

infrastructure and helps create jobs. State park facilities and historic sites will receive \$92.5 million to make much-needed repairs and improvements. An additional \$40 million will support projects to repair the deteriorating conditions of aging environmental infrastructure, such as flood control, wastewater systems and recreational facilities.

Other provisions in the 2014-15 budget will help to support tourism and recreation in the state, including:

- \$6 million for 50 new projects to provide recreational access to approximately 380,000 acres of existing state lands;
- \$4 million for upgrades and improvements to fish hatcheries;
- Reduces short-term fishing license fees and creates 10 days of promotional prices for sporting licenses;
- Authorizes crossbow hunting for small game and for big game throughout firearms seasons and during portions of archery season for hunters 14 years of age or older, in all counties north of Westchester; Increases the number of state-authorized free fishing days offered each year from two to eight; and
- Creates free or discounted adventure license holders for new and existing lifetime sporting and park license holders.