



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Jacobs Calls For Increase In Environmental Protection Fund

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(Hamburg, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs (60th SD) is being joined by local elected officials as he calls on the Governor and legislative leaders to include an increase in the state’s Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) in the final state budget. The EPF was created in 1993 to provide funding for broad categories of projects related to solid waste, parks and recreation and open space. Jacobs is seeking to grow the fund from \$300 million to \$350 million this year.

“The EPF is one of the most versatile and impactful initiatives in the budget, helping to fund projects that conserve open space, improve water quality, revitalize waterfronts, create local parks and trails, promote waste reduction and improve our overall environmental health,” said Senator Jacobs. “The return on the investment we receive from EPF funds, and the growing needs, particularly here in the 60<sup>th</sup> Senate District, require us to make a significant increase in this budget year.”

Jacobs’ 60<sup>th</sup> Senate District stretches from Grand Island to Brant, and is bordered by more than 43 miles of waterfront. He pointed out that challenges ranging from shoreline erosion and contaminated water to aging infrastructure and wastewater treatment management needs compromise the recreational and economic development potential of these natural resources in their host communities. Of the \$50 million increase requested by Jacobs, he said that a minimum of \$15 million could be used in just four municipalities.

Hamburg Town Supervisor Jim Shaw, emphasized that EPF Funding is crucial to the development of Lake Erie and inland waterways as meccas for tourism and recreation. “Lake Erie Shoreline erosion threatens public access to Lake Erie, impairs property values and enhances the prospect of damage from wind, rain, ice and snow,” the Supervisor said. “I wholeheartedly support the efforts of Senator Jacobs for funding increases to the State’s Environmental Protection Fund.”

“The Town of Evans’ access to Lake Erie, particularly Sturgeon Point Marina, is not only a valuable recreational and economic development resource but an important public safety asset for boaters navigating the Lake between Buffalo and Dunkirk,” said Evans Supervisor Mary Hosler. “The minimum investment needed to ensure the stability and functionality of the Marina going forward ranges between \$3 and \$5 million. The increase in EPF Funding requested by Senator Jacobs could be an important potential source of revenue for us and we are grateful for his leadership in advocating for these additional monies.”

The Tonawanda shoreline has always been affected by the constant currents of the Niagara River, and the City and Town of Tonawanda recently entered into an agreement to jointly explore funding sources to address waterway needs. The two-mile stretch along Niawanda Park in the City is a vital part of the Empire State Trailway and attracts over 600,000 visitors a year.

“The continual rising and lowering of water levels, the speed of the current (7 knots) and the regular onslaught of ice jams renders the Niawanda Park shoreline in a constant state of repair,” said Mayor Rick Davis. “Our residents have ranked our waterfront as the number one quality of life resource in the City, and cost estimates to buttress our shoreline are in the range of \$2.5 million. We are in total support of Senator Jacobs’ request and hope that the Governor and leaders in Albany increase EPF funding so all residents along the 43 mile stretch of the 60<sup>th</sup> District can enjoy our waterfront for years to come.”

"The Town of Tonawanda’s overflow retention facility requires investments well in excess of \$20 million if we are going to continue to effectively address our environmental and wastewater treatment needs,” said Supervisor Joe Emminger. “Any increase to the Environmental Protection Fund that could be used to help offset such dramatic costs would be welcome, and we wholeheartedly support Senator Jacobs’ efforts to grow the size of the fund in this year’s state budget."

EPF supported industries generate approximately \$40 billion in revenue each year. An analysis by the Trust for Public Land found that for every \$1 in EPF funds invested in land and water protection, \$7 in economic benefits are generated for New York State. This substantial economic benefit, as well as the state’s ability to leverage federal, local and private dollars, only stands to improve with an increased budget allocation according to Jacobs.

“The return on investment from EPF funds and the jobs that are created by EPF funded projects have a very significant positive impact on our economy,” said Jacobs. “When you take this impact into account, the needs that exist in Western New York and across the entire state, and the fact that EPF funding has remained constant for the third consecutive year, all these factors point to why we need to make this increase a reality in this year’s final state budget,” the Senator concluded.