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THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



**ROBERT G. ORTT**  
SENATOR, 62<sup>ND</sup> DISTRICT

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Basil Seggos, Commissioner  
Department of Environmental Conservation  
625 Broadway  
Albany, NY 12233

Dear Commissioner Seggos,

On July 27<sup>th</sup>, visitors from all over the world witnessed a large area surrounding Niagara Falls turn into a dark cloud that produced a foul odor, which drove away tourists. The Niagara Falls Water Board stated that this was a routine maintenance issue, which we now know is incorrect.

It is my understanding that there is an official investigation being conducted by the Department of Environmental Conservation. I applaud the swift action taken by the Governor to call for this investigation as it is imperative that we get to the bottom of this incident. I hope that the results will be released in a timely matter so we can hold the Niagara Falls Water Board accountable.

There are roughly 8 million visitors who come to Niagara Falls area each year. This incident has made national and international headlines. This has hurt the reputation of Niagara Falls and could have a negative impact on the tourism economy, which has been one of the few bright spots in Niagara Falls, and an area that New York State has spent tens of millions to help keep afloat.

The people of Niagara Falls and tourists have a right to know the results of this investigation, and so do local elected officials so we can continue to hold the water board accountable and prevent another incident like this from happening again. Trust and transparency are two qualities that our fellow New Yorkers, and tourists, deserve when it comes to their safety and that of our natural resources.

I thank you again for your swift investigation into this incident. I look forward to seeing this investigation concluded in a timely manner and a being made available to the public. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (716) 434-0680 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert G. Ortt'.

Robert G. Ortt  
State Senator, 62<sup>nd</sup> District