

# *Friends of New York's Environment*

*Protecting our land, air and water*

February 22, 2007

Eliot Spitzer, Governor  
Executive Chamber  
State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Joseph L. Bruno, President Pro Tem & Majority Leader  
New York State Senate  
Legislative Office Building, Room 909  
Albany, NY 12247

Sheldon Silver, Speaker  
New York State Assembly  
Legislative Office Building, Room 932  
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Governor Spitzer, Majority Leader Bruno and Speaker Silver:

On behalf of the more than 200 organizations and more than 4 million members of groups belonging to the *Friends of New York's Environment* coalition, we are writing to express our appreciation for the positive environmental proposals contained in this year's executive budget proposal. These proposals represent a good step forward and an opportunity to significantly improve environmental protection and the preservation of New York's natural and community resources. We also thank the Senate and Assembly for their past support of increases to the Environmental Protection Fund and especially for the progress realized last year.

Individually and collectively, the environmental, health, agricultural, recreational and urban, suburban, coastal and rural stakeholder groups and coalitions signed below urge each of you, the full Senate and Assembly and the Executive team, to work together to ensure that the final 2007-2008 budget includes:

- **An updated Bottle Bill and real progress towards an Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) that expands to \$500 million by 2010.** Clean, healthy communities and well funded environmental community and agricultural programs depend on this.
- **Restoration of 200 plus environmental staffing positions** across multiple agencies to make sure that the State has the capacity and the skilled and committed employees for priority programs, enforcement of environmental laws and policies, and disbursement of EPF funds.
- **Increased incentives for local open space conservation, and continued consideration of a future state-wide clean water, environmental and parks bond act** to further advance protection of our land, air and water, before it's too late.

As you well know, New York's EPF, which was first established in 1993, is a unique and visionary approach to environmental protection. With its pay-as-you-go reliance on dedicated resources, traditionally from Real Estate Transfer revenue, the EPF has served the citizens of New York for more than a decade as a reliable, cost-effective source of \$1.5 billion in environmental funding. Although it does not meet all of the state's pressing conservation and resource protection needs, it provides a solid foundation for moving forward.

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### **Reasons to update the Bottle Bill and expand dedicated environmental funding:**

Our organizations have remained united for over seven years in the belief that a growing EPF benefits all of the State's constituents. Raising the EPF by a minimum \$100 million over the next two years as proposed in the Executive Budget means that there will be more money available in New York to protect farmland and open space, help the fight to protect our air, water and ocean resources, increase community education about the importance of pollution prevention and recycling, and expand recycling. And this is just a portion of what could be accomplished. The expanded fund also provides an opportunity to increase support for urban forestry, state land stewardship, smart growth, historic sites, local parks, fish and wildlife and zoos, botanical gardens and aquaria, together with other EPF programs. Cities, neglected urban areas and underserved communities need their fair share of environmental help too. Together you can also establish a new fund for diesel retrofits and cleanup and improve the availability of EPF dollars to smaller community based non-profit organizations.

Today the Friends of New York's Environment coalition not only thanks the Executive for a good budget plan, and thanks the Assembly for past support of updates to the Bottle Bill, but renews its support of the bottle bill update. We are united in our belief that including non-carbonated beverages such as bottled water and Snapple-type drinks in what is already the state's most successful litter and waste reduction program, is the important next step we can all take to promote clean communities and environmental protection. Beverage companies in New York are currently keeping unclaimed deposits from bottles and cans that are not returned. In other states, including Massachusetts, Maine, Michigan, Hawaii and California, unclaimed bottle deposits go to the state to benefit the public. It is truly a win-win situation when we can work together to reduce the stream of waste flowing into New York's landfills, improve the quality of life in our communities by reducing litter, and generate dedicated revenue for the environment by returning the unclaimed nickel deposits to the EPF.

Organizations and coalitions signed below have already begun to work in support of the executive budget proposal, sometimes with proposed amendments and enhancements. We have begun to hold citizen lobby days representing many of the constituencies that benefit from EPF funding. We will be telling Senate and Assembly representatives and partners what we support in this plan and urge development of a final budget agreement that addresses our individual and collective priorities.

We look forward to working with the Executive and Legislature to achieve the goal of an updated bottle bill, an EPF that expands to \$500 million by 2010, restoration of critical environmental staff, and increased incentives for local open space conservation in this budget. Although that will not allow us to respond to all the state's unmet environmental protection needs, it will continue moving us forward in the direction this executive budget proposal sets. We look forward to partnering with each of you as this budget is developed and implemented.

Sincerely,

Friends of NY's Environment

See attached list of organizations and coalitions

CC: Paul Frances, Judith Enck, Steve Mitnick, Carol Ash, Pete Grannis, Pat Hooker  
Senators Johnson and Marcellino, Assemblyperson Farrell  
Senate Minority Leader Malcolm A. Smith and Assembly Minority Leader James Tedisco.

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1 in 9: The Long Island Breast Cancer Action Coalition  
Adirondack Council, Brian Houseal, Executive Director  
Adirondack Land Trust, Michael Carr, Executive Director  
Adirondack Mountain Club, Neil F. Woodworth, Executive Director  
Alley Pond Environmental Center, Irene V. Scheid  
Alliance for Clean Energy New York, Carol E. Murphy, Executive Director  
American Farmland Trust, David Haight, New York State Director  
American Littoral Society, Northeast Chapter, Don Riepe, Director  
American Lung Association of New York State, Inc., Peter Iwanowicz, Vice President  
Appalachian Mountain Club, Andrew J. Falander, Executive Director  
Arbor Hill Environmental Justice Corp., Aaron Mair, Founder  
Agricultural Stewardship Association, Teri Ptacek, Executive Director  
Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, David Gibson, Executive Director  
Aquarium of Niagara, Gay Molnar, Director of Development  
Audubon New York, David J. Miller, Executive Director  
Bayport Civic Association, Bob Draffin, President  
Bellport Beach Property Owners Association. Margaret Bermel, President  
Brentwood/Bay Shore Breast Cancer Coalition  
Bridgewater National Bank, Thomas J. Tobin  
Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Lois Carswell, Chairman Emeritus  
Brooklyn Greenway Initiative, Milton Puryear, Director of Planning  
Buffalo Audubon Society Inc., Bill Hudson, Executive Director  
Buffalo Zoo, Donna Fernandes, Ph.D., President/CEO  
Center for Energy and the Environment at New York Institute of Technology, Sarah Meyland  
Citizens Action Committee West (CAC West), Hank Beck  
Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director  
Citizens' Environmental Coalition, Steve Breymna, Ph.D., Executive Director  
Clean New York, Kathy Curtis, Policy Director  
Coalition of Living Museums, including over 100 individual organizations  
Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor, Dana Hoffman  
Coalition to Save the Woods, Mary Ann Johnston  
Columbia Land Conservancy, Peter R. Paden, Executive Director  
Concerned Residents of Southeast, Rick Feuerman, President  
Conservation Alliance of New York, Inc., David Miller, Chairman  
Container Recycling Institute, Pat Franklin, Executive Director, Jennifer Gitlitz Research Director  
Community Health and Environment Coalition  
Concerned Citizens of Montauk  
Concerned Residents of North Salem, Amy Rosmarin, Director  
Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Scott Sutcliffe  
Delaware Highlands Conservancy, Sue Currier, Executive Director  
Ducks Unlimited, John A. Cushman II, State Chairman  
Dutchess Land Conservancy, Becky Thornton, President  
East End Forever  
East Hampton Trails Preservation Society  
Eastern Long Island Audubon Society, Eileen Schwinn, President  
Environmental Advocates of New York, Rob Moore, Executive Director  
Environmental Defense, Jim Tripp, General Counsel  
Federated Conservationists of Westchester County, Herb Fox, President  
Federation of NY Solid Waste Associations, Meg Morris, Federation Chairman  
Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, Scott Ingmire, Chair  
Finger Lakes Land Trust, Andy Zepp, Executive Director  
Four Harbors Audubon Society  
Friends of Brooklyn Park, Harry J. Bubbins, Director  
Friends of Hempstead Plains, Betsy Gulotta  
Friends of the Long Island Greenbelt, Sandi Ferguson  
Friends of the Bay, Kyle Rabin

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## *Protecting Our Land, Air and Water*

Friends of Hudson River Park, Albert K. Butzel, President  
Friends of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge  
Greenburgh Nature Center, William Lawyer, Executive Director  
Greene County Soil & Water Conservation District, Rene VanSchaack, Executive Director  
Genesee Land Trust, Gay Mills, Executive Director  
Great South Bay Audubon Society, Linda Grant  
Green Point of New York, Inc., John L. Iurka  
Group for the South Fork, Robert S. DeLuca, President  
Highlands Coalition, Tom Gilbert, Acting Chair  
Hiking Long Island, Ken Kinder  
Hudson Highlands Land Trust, Andrew T. Chmar, Executive Director  
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Greg Swanzey, Executive Director  
Invasive Plants Council of New York, Steve Clements, Director  
Izaak Walton League of America, New York Division, Les Monostory, President  
Lake George Land Conservancy, Nancy Williams, Director  
Land Trust Alliance, Lynn Schumann, North East Director  
League of Women Voters of New York  
Long Island Drinking Water Coalition, Joe Lorintz  
Long Island Environmental Voters Forum, Richard Johannesen, Board Chairman  
Long Island Farm Bureau, Joseph Gergela, Executive Director  
Long Island Greenbelt Trails Conference  
Long Island Neighborhood Network, Lewis Neal  
Long Island Pine Barrens Society, Richard Amper, Executive Director  
Long Island Invasive Species Management Area (LIWMA), Kathy Schwager, Director  
Manitoga, Inc., Kitty McCullough, Executive Director  
Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, Jill Knapp, Executive Director  
Mohonk Preserve, Glenn Hoagland, Executive Director  
Mountain Top Arboretum, Joan Kutcher, Executive Director  
Nassau Land Trust, Kathleen Kleinman, Director  
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Richard Schrader, Legislative Director  
New York Botanical Garden, Rosemary Ginty, Vice President for Government & Community Relations  
New York Chapter, Solid Waste Association of North America  
New York City Audubon, E. J. McAdams, Executive Director  
New York City Soil & Water Conservation District, Eugenia M. Flatow, Chair  
New York Conservation Council, Harold L. Palmer, President  
New Yorkers for Parks, Christian DiPalermo, Executive Director  
New York Farm Bureau, John Lincoln, President  
New York Flora Association, Troy Weldy, Director  
New York League of Conservation Voters, Marcia Bystry, Executive Director  
New York – New Jersey Trail Conference, Edward Goodell, Executive Director  
New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), Laura Haight, Senior Environmental Associate  
New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse and Recycling, Jeff Cooper, President  
New York State Association for Solid Waste Management  
New York State Urban and Community Forestry Council, Patricia Tobin, President  
North Fork Audubon Society, Maureen Cullinane, President  
North Fork Environmental Council, Gwynn Schroeder, Executive Director  
North Shore Audubon Society, Jennifer Wilson-Pines  
North Shore Land Alliance, Lisa W. Ott, President  
NY Trout Unlimited, Ron Urban, Council Chairman  
Open Space Council, Marilyn England  
Open Space Institute, Joe Martens, President  
Open Space Preservation Trust  
Operation SPLASH (Stop Pollution, Littering and Save Harbors), Rob Weltner  
Orange County Land Trust, James Delaune, Executive Director  
Palisades Interstate Park Commission, Jim Hall, Executive Director

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Parks and Trails New York, Robin Dropkin, Executive Director  
Peconic Baykeeper  
Peconic Land Trust, John Halsey, President  
people's Environmental Network of New York (pENNY), Vicki Baker, Chair  
Port Washington Parks Conservancy, Myron Blumenfeld, Chairman  
Queens Botanical Garden, Susan Lacerte, Executive Director  
Regional Plan Association, Robert Pirani, Director Environmental Programs  
Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks, Peter Bauer, Executive Director  
Residents for a More Beautiful Port Washington, Jennifer Rimmer  
Riverkeeper, Inc. Alex Matthiessen, President & Hudson Riverkeeper  
Saratoga P.L.A.N., Alane Ball Chinian, Executive Director  
Save The Pine Bush, Lynn Jackson  
Save Open Space Now 2000, Alex Wipf  
Scenic Hudson, Ned Sullivan, President  
Serpentine Art and Nature Commons, Inc., George Y. Bramwell, Esq., President  
Shoreham Civic Organization, Mary Daum  
Sierra Club – Atlantic Chapter, John Stouffer, Legislative Director  
Solid Waste Association of North America  
Southampton Baymen's Association, Ian Burliuk, President  
Southampton Trails Preservation Society  
South Shore Audubon Society, Michael Sperling, President  
Staten Island Zoo, John Caltabiano, Director  
Sterling Forest Partnership, Mary Yrizarry Chair  
Suffolk County Water Authority, Steve Jones  
Sustainable Long Island, Sara Lansdale  
Sweetbriar Nature Center, Marie J. Smith, Executive Director  
Tanglewood Nature Center and Museum, Valerie Heywood, Curator  
Teatown Lake Reservation, Fred W. Koontx, Ph.D., Executive Director  
The Binghamton Zoo at Ross Park, Mike Janis, Executive Director  
The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, Tom Alworth, Executive Director  
The Garden Conservancy, Louise Jensen, Associate Director of Preservation  
The Nature Conservancy, Henry Tepper, State Director  
The Trust for Public Land, Rose Harvey, Regional Director  
Thousand Islands Land Trust, Aaron Vogel, Executive Director  
Three Village Community Trust, Cynthia Barnes, President  
Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, Linda M. Garrett, Executive Director  
Utica Zoo, Elizabeth Irons, Executive Director  
Vision Long Island, Eric Alexander  
Wading River Civic Association, Sid Bail  
Wallkill Valley Land Trust, Christopher Duncan, Executive Director  
Warwick Smart Growth Alliance, Andrew McLaughlin  
Wave Hill, Kate French, Director  
Westchester Land Trust, Paul Gallay, Executive Director  
West Branch Conservation Association, Martus Granirer, Executive Director  
West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc. (WE ACT), Peggy Shepard, Executive Director  
West Islip Breast Cancer Coalition  
W. Hayward Burns Environmental Education Center, Ken Watson, Director of Urban Environmental Programs  
Wildlife Conservation Society, John F. Calvelli, Senior Vice President  
Woodstock Land Conservancy, Michael DeWan, President & John Winter, Executive Director