



Trail Experience You Can Trust



Restore the Environmental Protection Fund

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***New York-New Jersey Trail Conference Joins “We Love New York” Campaign, Urges State Legislators to Restore Environmental Fund during 2010-11 Budget Negotiations***

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference today joined a broad coalition of organizations committed to protecting the health of New York’s land, air and water, as well as open space, botanical gardens, farms and zoos, to launch an advertising campaign urging state lawmakers to restore money to the State’s Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). Governor Paterson has proposed slashing the Fund by \$69 million or 33 percent.

The campaign asks state leaders to demonstrate their love for New York by supporting the Environmental Protection Fund. “We Love New York” is the first high profile advertising campaign ever launched by the groups, which believe the Governor’s proposed budget cuts are unfair and irresponsibly harsh on environmental programs that protect public health and safety.

This is the second year in a row that the Governor disproportionately cut the Fund, which helps ensure the health and safety of New York’s air and water, updates sewage treatment facilities, keeps working farms operating, preserves historic heritage and open space, revitalizes waterfronts, monitors pesticide use, supports parks, zoos, botanical gardens and aquaria, and much more. Last year, state lawmakers bucked the Governor and restored a portion of the Fund during budget negotiations.

The Trail Conference is calling on New York State lawmakers to restore the Environmental Protection Fund during budget negotiations and support continued critical investments in the environment. Environmental funds have supported important land protection efforts in the state, including along the Shawangunk Ridge, a state-identified conservation priority because of its importance as an undeveloped corridor for human recreation and wildlife protection.

The Ridge has been a focus of land conservation efforts by the Trail Conference for many years. We have developed the 40-mile long Shawangunk Ridge Trail, and seek to protect all the lands it crosses and to protect other lands so that those portions remaining on roadways can be moved

into natural areas. The Trail Conference also seeks to connect the trail to other trails and communities along the Ridge to further enhance the outdoor recreation opportunities in an area that already attracts thousands of visitors annually.

Gov. David Paterson's budget plan calls for a 33 percent cut in the EPF, down to \$143 million, which includes a moratorium on purchases of open space. Other areas of the budget have been reduced by just one or two percent. Some budget lines were actually increased. The Governor's plan also calls for the addition of \$10 million in new expenses to the EPF, to pay for day-to-day state expenses. Such "offloads" from the state budget's general fund are typically not allowed in capital projects accounts like this one.

The Environmental Protection Fund is New York State's primary source of money for capital projects that protect water quality, wildlife habitat and clean air. It was created during the recession of 1993 to provide a reliable source of funds for essential environmental projects such as landfill closure, recycling facilities and open space/watershed protection. The current EPF is \$222 million.