



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Krueger Decries Empire State Development Corporation Grant: Nearly Half a Million Dollars Awarded to Force-Feed Ducks at Hudson Valley Foie Gras Farm

LIZ KRUEGER May 25, 2006

New York, NY – State Senator Liz Krueger was shocked to learn that the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) awarded a \$420,000 grant to a farm that force-feeds ducks to expand their livers a startling 10 times the normal size—an inhumane practice used to mass produce foie gras. Foie gras is a delicacy often found in French restaurants.

To enlarge the duck's liver, the source of meat used to make foie gras, the farm inserts a tube into the esophagus of each duck and three times every day the farmers pour approximately one cup of corn pellets directly into each duck's stomach. This takes place every day over a 4-week period.

"The duck's livers are forcibly grown to such extreme measures that the animal often dies prematurely due to their internal organs exploding inside their bodies. It is simply mind-boggling the ESDC would find the subsidizing of the cruelty to animals to be an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars," Krueger said.

Hudson Valley Foie Gras, the recipient of the nearly half-million dollar grant says the money will be used to produce two manure treatment facilities as well as to renovate the building that houses the animals. The farm intends to add only 10 employees to their current staff of

150 over the next three years, all the while implementing a 10 percent increase in the number of ducks the farm processes annually, reaching 325,000.

Krueger added, "The paltry economic benefits the local community may reap fails to justify the way these animals are handled, and fails to show New York taxpayers their dollars will be used in a responsible way. As the production and sale of foie gras is being banned by state legislatures and city councils across the country, now is not the time for the State of New York to spend taxpayer dollars bucking this trend." New York is one of only two states who continue to produce foie gras.

Krueger noted, "this grant is just the latest in a series of questionable funding decisions by the ESDC. In 2004, fully 40 percent of ESDC-funded projects were out of compliance with job creation goals according to ESDC's own report. Less than half of the projects not meeting these goals were penalized in any way."

Senator Krueger has introduced legislation (S.5921) to increase accountability for these kinds of corporate subsidy deals. The Corporate Accountability for Tax Expenditures Act would require that State economic assistance provided by any state agency or public authority must be based on the terms of a standardized written incentive agreement. The legislation mandates that certain development assistance agreements be submitted to the Department of Taxation and Finance, and also provides that if a business fails to create or retain the specified number of jobs and breaks the contract, the business will no longer qualify for State economic assistance.

"This grant reflects the poor judgment of the ESDC when operating within a system which fails to mandate transparency and accountability when dispensing taxpayer dollars to corporations," Krueger declared. "Giving nearly half-million dollars to an organization that fails to provide substantive local economic impact in terms of jobs, ads insult to injury for

the already inhumane and offensive animal rights violations occurring at the Hudson Valley Foie Gras Farm."