



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Betty Little

Little Urges Governor to Save Tax Dollars on Forest Land Purchases

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September 1, 2009

Senator Betty Little has urged Governor David Paterson to save tax dollars by buying conservation easements on new state lands rather than buying the vast tracts in fee title. New York State is currently facing a \$2 billion budget deficit and the Legislature is expected to convene later in September to take up cost-savings measures.

Here is the letter Little sent to the governor:

July 31, 2009

Honorable David A. Paterson
Executive Chamber
2nd Floor, State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

Having recently learned about our need to address a mid-year budget gap of \$2.1 billion, I want to offer an idea for consideration.

New York State is considering the purchase in fee title of approximately 69,000 acres of lands located in the Adirondack Park. The Nature Conservancy bought the land from paper manufacturer Finch Pruyn.

For several reasons, I believe purchasing most of the land as conservation easement may be more appropriate, primarily because it will cost the state less money at a time when we need to control spending. Additionally, conservation easements would allow for recreational access important to visitors and residents of the Park and could permit hunting camps, which have a long cultural history in the Adirondacks, to remain accessible.

It is also important that we consider the use of these lands in an environmentally sensitive manner. With proper management, the timber could be used for renewable energy, including the manufacture of wood pellets in the Adirondacks. Also, the timber on these lands would remain available for our paper mills, which employ hundreds of people in the Adirondacks, and whose future presence is absolutely essential for the economic sustainability of this region I represent.

Lastly, there are some unique and environmentally sensitive areas within this vast tract that should be preserved and protected. This can and should be accomplished by carving these small parcels out of the larger tract and purchasing them in fee title.

I hope you will consider this proposal and contact me if you wish to discuss it further.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth O'C. Little
Senator

EOL/dem

Cc: DEC Commissioner Alexander "Pete" Grannis
Robert L. Megna, Budget Director