



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Hugh T. Farley

Senator Farley Criticizes Parks “Deal”

HUGH T. FARLEY May 28, 2010

| ISSUE: **STATE PARKS**

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Senator Hugh T. Farley (R,C,I – Schenectady) joined business and environmental groups in criticizing the legislation that promised to open State parks only if the Legislature agreed to impose millions of dollars in new taxes and fees while also sweeping a tremendous amount of money out of the Environmental Protection Fund, which supports numerous environmental, agricultural and local government programs.

“New York has some of the most beautiful natural and historic resources in the entire nation, and we have been fighting all year long to save the 55 state parks and historic sites that Governor Paterson unilaterally decided to close,” said

Senator Farley. “But this deal, developed in the middle of the night, is the wrong approach.”

“Throughout my career, I have been a staunch advocate for our State parks and historic areas. Years ago, I saved the Ulysses S. Grant Historic Cottage, and just recently, I worked with the Town of Caroga to keep the Caroga Lake State campground open. I certainly wanted to see our parks opened, but I voted no in protest of the poison pills in this bill. The State should not have held these parks hostage and exploited the public’s love for these parks.”

Groups such as the Business Council, the National Federation of Independent Businesses, the Manufacturers Association of Central New York, EPL/Environmental Advocates, the New York League of Conservation Voters and Long Island Environmental Voters Forum all opposed the bill.

“The Governor made a mistake in not funding these treasured resources in the first place, and then made another mistake in not responding to public concerns about the parks. State parks and historic sites improve our quality of life and provide important recreational, educational, cultural and economic benefits to our society,” said Senator Farley. “They also represent a commitment to past generations and to future generations.”

“Over the past several weeks, my Republican colleagues and I have offered and voted for several proposals to save the parks. But for the Governor and legislative leadership to let this crisis build, to wait until the start of the Memorial Day weekend, and to then rush through a flawed proposal is unfair, inappropriate and bad public policy. The reality is that we should never have reached this point. The budget should have been passed almost two months ago. I continue to call on the Democratic leadership of the Senate and Assembly to stay in Albany and to convene the budget conference committees as required by law.

“ Instead of rearranging spending priorities, the Governor and Democratic Leadership of the Senate and Assembly resorted to a piecemeal approach that raided environmental funds and used the parks crisis as a way to raise New York’s already unbearable tax burden,” Senator Farley continued. “This will place new burdens on already-struggling businesses and will make businesses in upstate New York -- especially manufacturing businesses -- even less competitive.”

“The way the Democratic leadership sought to deal with the park closings is by proposing a bill that would impose millions in higher taxes and would hijack millions from the Environmental Protection Fund. This is a classic case of robbing Peter to pay Paul, using an issue that families care about as a pawn in budget brinkmanship. This is irresponsible and unacceptable. Furthermore, this action does nothing to bring us closer to a final budget agreement and would cost us even more jobs in an already troubled economy.

“I join every working family in New York in calling for a reversal of this ill-advised policy, which held our parks hostage in an attempt to raise taxes. The legislation advanced today was nothing more than a bait and switch gimmick that ultimately raises taxes, and does further damage to New York’s struggling economy” Senator Farley stated.

“We saw the Democratic Leadership of the Senate and Assembly offer a Hobson’s Choice of either closing the parks or raising taxes. Neither should be done, and a better solution could have been found” Senator Farley concluded.

To view Senator Farley's remarks on the park's bill, click here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Bdmat_AZmI