



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

## Bonacic: Budget Agreement Moving Forward

JOHN J. BONACIC March 22, 2011

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE**

### **Budgets for Housing, Agriculture, and Environmental Conservation Largely Agreed Upon**

State Senator John Bonacic, a member of the Senate Finance Committee, today provided a budget update on issues relating to Agriculture, Housing, and Environmental Conservation. “The Governor, Senate, and Assembly have reached several three way agreements. As with anything, I am always cautious until the final budget bills are passed and signed into law, but the constructive discussions all three sides are having are hopefully moving us to a positive conclusion on the budget,” Senator Bonacic said.

Among the items on which agreement appears to have been reached:

- \* \$134 million for the State Environmental Protection fund, including \$500,000 for capital improvements for Belleayre Mountain;
- \* Funding for agricultural interests such as the Cornell Lab, Cornell Rabies program, the Apple Association; Farm Net; the Center for Dairy Excellence; the State’s Wine and Grape Foundation; and funding for maple producers;
- \* Restoration of funding for Rural Preservation Companies in the amount of \$3,539,000. Rural Preservation Companies such as RUPCO, the M-ARK Project, the SHARP Committee; Delaware Opportunities; Western Catskills Community Revitalization Council; and Rural Sullivan Housing Corporation;
- \* Allocates \$1 million to New York’s Access to Homes program. This program, created by a law sponsored by Senator Bonacic, provides funds to disabled New Yorkers, with a special focus on disabled military veterans, to make home improvements so as to enable homeowners to stay in their home as opposed to having to move to more expensive, advanced care locations.

One local issue not yet resolved, is the Senate’s effort to restore funding for Belleayre Mountain. So far, no agreement has been reached with the Assembly and Governor to support that restoration. The restoration, \$2.3 million, would allow Belleayre to retain its year round employees, most of whom who were laid off earlier this year.

Although Belleayre is a small component of the massive State Department of Environmental Conservation, it suffered 25% of all losses in DEC full time employment. “Belleayre is an economic engine in creating private sector jobs for small business along the Route 28 corridor, connecting Ulster and Delaware Counties,” Senator Bonacic said.

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