



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

Legislature to Authorize Belleayre Transfer to Orda

JOHN J. BONACIC March 26, 2012

Senate Position Generally Included in Final Budget Agreement

Legislation to authorize the transfer of Belleayre Mountain Ski Center to the Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA), will be included in the final State budget. The authorizing language is contained in the agreed upon budget bills S.6260C and A.9060C.

"I am pleased that we were able to work with the Governor to better ensure a strong future for Belleayre. Belleayre has always been a tourism priority and a job creator for the Catskills. The priorities the Senate sought for Belleayre, were achieved as part of the final resolution," Senator John Bonacic said.

The Legislature agreed to key requirements of Senator Bonacic, to better ensure the future viability of Belleayre. Included in the agreement:

- * A requirement that Belleayre be continued as a year round tourism destination with a level of capital investment to that Belleayre can be operated, maintained, and improved in a similar manner to Whiteface and Gore;
- * One ORDA Board Member, each for Delaware and Ulster Counties (Governor Cuomo had initially proposed just one Board member to be shared by both counties);
- * An increase in ORDA's Community Advisory Board from 15 to 19. Two additional members would be appointed by the Delaware County Board of Supervisors and two by the Ulster County Legislature;
- * A requirement for a local ORDA office be located at Belleayre;
- * A requirement that one of two ORDA Vice-Chairs be a resident of Ulster or Delaware Counties (the person chosen would be chosen by the recommendation of the Town Boards of the Towns of Middletown and Shandaken).

Ulster County Legislature Chairman Terry Bernardo said, "Belleayre is responsible for many jobs in Ulster County. Belleayre and the surrounding region were being bled to death by an agency that treated Belleayre like a piñata instead of the tourism asset that it is. We can do no worse under ORDA than we did under the DEC, and I believe we will do much better."

Joe Kelly, Chairman of the Coalition to Save Belleayre said, "I am pleased that Belleayre will be freed of the DEC's disinterest. The Coalition looks forward to partnering with ORDA, which is led by a long-time Catskills native, Ted Blazer. We are pleased that employees will be protected. It was not just the weather that has been rough on the ski industry this year, there has been a demoralizing factor because the agency that Belleayre was run by, really was not interested in the ski business. Things can only get better. I appreciate the efforts of Senator Bonacic, Assemblyman Cahill, and the Governor for spending so much time on Belleayre in this year's budget process."

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