



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

Senator Grisanti Honored As Champion Of New York State's Environmental Protection Fund

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A broad partnership of stakeholders from environmental organizations, conservation groups, zoos and aquariums, museums, botanical gardens, and community garden organizations joined together today on the Buffalo waterfront to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the NYS Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). The groups honored NYS Senator Mark Grisanti, who has become a champion of the EPF as chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee.

Established in 1993, the EPF is New York's dedicated source of funding for protecting what we love about New York-clean drinking water, magnificent parks, vibrant waterfronts, renowned zoos and aquariums, and working farms. The EPF has invested \$2.7 billion in

every region of the state, including nearly \$100 million in the eight counties of WNY. Over the last 20 years, Erie County has ranked in the top five for total EPF investments out of all NYS counties. The EPF has supported projects throughout WNY to help revitalize and restore the economically important Buffalo waterfront and Great Lakes; enhance tourist attractions such as Niagara Falls State Park and the Buffalo Zoo; save family farms, establish community gardens, increase municipal recycling, and much more.

In the past twenty years, annual EPF appropriations have grown from \$31 million in 1993 to more than \$250 million in 2008 at the EPF's highest. The EPF now stands at \$153 million. Governor Cuomo, together with the Legislature, added \$19 million to the EPF in this year's budget - the first increase since the recent economic crisis - which will enhance critical programs that benefit every county in New York State by creating jobs, conserving clean air and water, and supporting essential municipal services. A 2011 study by The Trust for Public Land showed that every \$1 invested in land and water protection through the EPF has returned \$7 to the state in natural goods and services. Through additional program enhancements in future state budgets, the region and the state can continue to capitalize on the significant economic returns generated by the EPF while also protecting clean water and clean air, and ensuring our quality of life for future generations.

Senator Mark Grisanti said: "It is with great honor that I receive this award. The EPF has been doing wonderful things for our environment for the past twenty years, from improving drinking water quality to assisting numerous parks and historical sites the EPF has been invaluable. It has been my pleasure to serve as its champion since being elected to the Senate and I look forward to continuing the fight for a fully funded EPF."

Brian Smith, Program & Communications Director for CCE said: "Whether you are a small farmer from Wyoming County, a Buffalo family that enjoys the waterfront, or a tourist that has come to experience the extraordinary Darwin Martin House, everyone's quality of life

has been enhanced by the EPF. CCE thanks the leaders that had the vision and foresight to create EPF twenty years ago, as well as Senator Grisanti, for his leadership to continue this vision and grow the EPF now and into the future."

Donna Fernandes, PhD, Buffalo Zoo President said: "Recurrent support for general operations is critical to the long-term stability of our living collections. The Buffalo Zoo is very grateful for the funding it has received from the EPF over the last twenty years. Thank you Governor Cuomo and thank you Senator Grisanti for your commitment to the environment."

Jill Jedlicka, Executive Director for Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper said: "Western New Yorkers understand that the health of our water is directly related to the health of our community and economy. Over the last twenty years the Environmental Protection Fund has helped catalyze important waterfront revitalization efforts, and looking to our future it can continue to be a strategic investment that provides multiple benefits such as local jobs, recreational opportunities, restored habitats, and clean water."

Susannah Barton, Executive Director at Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo (GGB) said: "The EPF impacts all areas of the State, including our urban areas where access to green space is so important. Funds from the EPF have helped our organization increase capacity in order to better serve the needs of Buffalo residents gardening in over 70 community gardens throughout the City. Everyone at GGB thanks Senator Grisanti for his continued support of the EPF."

Nancy Smith, Executive Director of the Western New York Land Conservancy said: "The Environmental Protection Fund has helped us protect and steward some of the region's most important natural areas, working farms and wildlife habitat. The EPF's capacity-building support leads directly to better access to healthy local foods and the ability to

preserve the iconic natural landscapes that make our region a desirable place to live, work and play. We congratulate and applaud Senator Grisanti for his firm commitment to the EPF and our environment."

David Swarts, President/CEO for Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens said: "The EPF funding that supports zoos, botanical gardens and aquariums (ZBGA) is an integral part of sustaining these important organizations. The Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens is thankful that the Governor, State Legislature and Senator Mark Grisanti, Chair of the Environmental Committee, for their efforts to protect and actually increase funding for ZBGA. This support allows the Botanical Gardens to fulfill its mission by connecting people and cultures through plants, education and research and helps to sustain the Gardens for generations to come."

Mark Mortenson, President & CEO for the Buffalo Museum of Science said: "The funding from the ZBGA allows us to keep Tifft Nature Preserve open for public enjoyment, there is no charge for admission to the preserve and this vital funding helps ensure that we can keep the preserve open and enjoyable for the public. On behalf of the staff and visitors, we would like to thank the Senator for all of his hard work in securing this funding for our area."