



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

Another Record Year for Our Beloved State Parks

JOSÉ M. SERRANO January 27, 2015

| ISSUE: **ENVIRONMENT**

Attendance in Parks Increases by 1.9 Million – Exceeds 60 Million for Third Year in a Row

(Albany, NY)- Senator José M. Serrano, the Ranking Member of the State Senate's Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks & Recreation, expressed enthusiasm over an announcement by New York State's Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's (OPRHP) that state park attendance topped 60 million visitors in 2014 for the third year in a row. State Parks' 2014 attendance was up 1.9 million visitors from the 60.1 million visitors hosted last year.

"New York State Parks continue to be a huge draw, bringing in over 62 million visitors to experience our majestic park system," said Senator Serrano. "From our beautiful beaches to our expansive trail system, New York has so much to offer for those who want to enjoy the great outdoors. Not only do parks represent a tremendous environmental and educational benefit, but parks are an economic engine with a 5:1 return on investment in state spending. I will fight to ensure that the legislature passes a final budget that includes Governor Cuomo's proposed \$110 Million dollars for park infrastructure spending so we can continue to revitalize and strengthen communities throughout the State while furthering the upward visitation trend we have experienced over the last few years."

In 2012, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law a bill sponsored by Senator Serrano, Senate Bill S2747A, which expanded the preexisting one-year Empire Passport by allowing OPRHP to offer three-year and five-year Empire Passports beginning in 2013. This year The Empire Passport, which provides unlimited day-use vehicle entries to State parks and recreational facilities, was featured in a Cyber Monday deal and continues to be an affordable and easily accessible option for everyone to come experience what New York State Parks have to offer.