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SENATOR, 29th District

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CHAIR, Senate Democratic Conference

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

Cultural Affairs, Tourism,
Parks and Recreation

COMMITTEES

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Science, Technology, Incubation
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The New York State Black, Puerto Rican,
Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus

March 18, 2014

Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Governor, New York State
Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Honorable Dean G. Skelos
Temporary President, New York State Senate
Legislative Office Building, Room 909
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Sheldon Silver
Speaker, New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Jeffrey D. Klein
Temporary President, New York State Senate
Legislative Office Building, Room 913
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Governor Cuomo and Legislative Leaders,

We write today regarding the very important issue of capital funding for our state parks and historic sites. The FY 2014-2015 Executive Budget proposal included \$92.5 million worth of New York Works Capital Funding for the Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation. Unfortunately, this funding was not included in the Senate's budget resolution passed last week. It is our sincere hope that this critical funding will be restored in the final budget.

As evidenced by the creation of New York Works Capital Funding Program two years ago, the state has recognized the urgent need to improve our park infrastructure. In fact, the New York Works Capital Funding Program has already made significant progress in improving the infrastructure and amenities at 81 parks and historic sites statewide. Despite the enormous progress that has been made, aging infrastructure and extreme weather conditions have further exacerbated the need for continued capital funding for our state parks. In 2012, prior to the devastation of Superstorm Sandy, it was estimated that 83% of state parks and historic sites were deteriorating. Currently, it is projected that there is a \$1 billion backlog in much needed repairs, upgrades, and renovations. Funding from the New York Works Capital Program will help replace outdated bathrooms, guarantee safe trails for hiking, and modernize bathhouses at parks across our state.

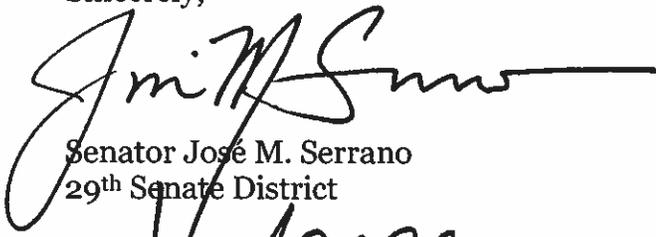
Whether you're enjoying the beaches of Long Island, hiking in Bear Mountain, or enjoying the scenic beauty of Niagara Falls, it is clear that New York parks are the crown jewel of our state. This is evident by the continued record-breaking visitorship year after year. In 2013, 60 million visitors enjoyed parks across our state. And all this activity has value beyond the obvious beauty, educational, and health benefits parks provide. Our parks are a major

economic engine for communities across the state, especially in our beautiful upstate regions. One recent study found that state parks provide a 5-to-1 return on investment to the state by helping to generate \$1.9 billion annually in economic activity and supporting 20,000 jobs. By restoring the \$92.5 million in funds through the New York Works Capital Funding Program we can keep pace with our magnificent yet aging park infrastructure while helping to spur economic activity and job growth. Most of all, we can ensure that New Yorkers can continue to enjoy a vital source of affordable recreational and cultural enrichment.

You have all shown tremendous leadership over the years by fighting to protect our state parks. Your commitment to our parks has never been in doubt, so I ask that we all join together to ensure our parks continue to thrive. Therefore, we respectfully request that the final budget restore the New York Works Capital Funding Program for the Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

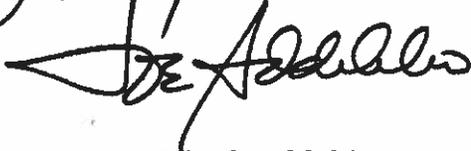
Sincerely,



Senator José M. Serrano
29th Senate District



Senator Michael Gianaris
12th Senate District



Senator Joseph Addabbo
15th Senate District



Senator Neil Breslin
44th Senate District



Senator David Carlucci
38th Senate District



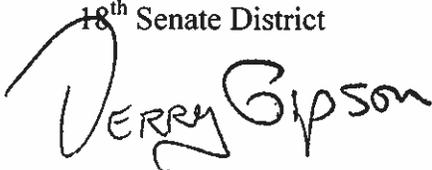
Senator Ruben Diaz
32nd Senate District



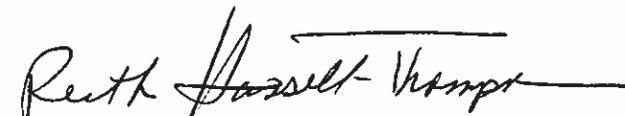
Senator Martin Dilan
18th Senate District



Senator Adriano Espaillat
31st Senate District



Senator Terry Gipson
41st Senate District



Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson
36th Senate District

Brad Hoylman

Senator Brad Hoylman
27th Senate District

Timothy Kennedy

Senator Timothy Kennedy
63rd Senate District

Ted O'Brien

Senator Ted O'Brien
55th Senate District

Bill Perkins

Senator Bill Perkins
30th Senate District

Kevin Parker

Senator Kevin Parker
21st Senate District

Gustavo Rivera

Senator Gustavo Rivera
33rd Senate District

Cecilia F. Tkaczyk

Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk
46th Senate District