

Amending The 2023 Budget To Provide Hudson River Watershed Alliance With Funding For Administrative And Program Support Services To Assist Various Agencies In Ulster County - Department Of Finance, Division Of Recovery And Resilience

Referred to: The Energy, Environment and Sustainability Committee (Chairwoman Greene and Legislators Hansut, Levine, Maloney, and Stewart), The Ways and Means Committee (Chairman Gavaris and Legislators Cahill, Roberts, Ronk, and Walter), and The American Rescue Plan Act Special Committee (Chairman Criswell and Legislators Corcoran, Levine, Lopez, and Sperry),

Legislator Eric Stewart offers the following:

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature has declared that access to clean water is a human right; and

WHEREAS, the Hudson River and its many tributaries cover nearly 13,400 square miles and are the life-giving foundation upon which the natural environment and our region's population, economy, and future prosperity depend; and

WHEREAS, the Hudson River Watershed Alliance (HRWA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization who works with 32 local watershed groups region-wide and whose mission is to unite and empower communities to protect their local water resources by supporting local watershed groups, helping communities work together on water issues, and communicate through a collective voice; and

WHEREAS, the groups under the purview and guidance of the HRWA convene stakeholders around common water issues, share information, coordinate projects, educate residents, and promote stewardship of their watersheds and build environmental resilience through projects like planning, tree planting, water monitoring, and stream cleanups; and

WHEREAS, among the 32 local watershed groups under the purview of the HRWA also include the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance (WRWA), and the Ulster County Water Quality Coordinating Committee; and

WHEREAS, the HRWA assists these groups in actively monitoring water quality to understand conditions, partners on research with academic institutions, and helps write and implement watershed management plans; and

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WHEREAS, the Rondout Creek Watershed Alliance (RCWA) is a grass-roots watershed group lacking official tax status that has been actively advocating, promoting and protecting the Rondout Creek and its watershed for many years through projects such as working with Riverkeeper in collecting samples from tributaries along the Rondout Creek in High Falls to check for bacterial contamination; working with the DEC's Trees for Tribes program in planting and maintaining thousands of native tree saplings along the Coxingkill in the Town of Rochester; working with the Cornell Cooperative Extension in conducting a clean-up along the Vernooy Kill in Ellenville; and working with municipalities on other projects all along the Rondout; and

WHEREAS, the RCWA has now matured as an organization to the point where it needs to work with a professional administrator to handle its managerial operations, organizational planning, coordination with other watershed groups, special event planning, public outreach, and social media to meet its goals and expanding role; and

WHEREAS the WRWA, also in need of additional administrative support, advocates for protection of the Wallkill River which flows 66 miles in NYS before joining the Rondout Creek and drains 552 sq miles, encompassing 48 municipalities in both NY and NJ, and has the mission of restoring the Wallkill River to its prime, to act as the voice of the River, and to advocate for the restoration of its entire watershed; and

WHEREAS the Ulster County Water Quality Coordinating Committee is a group comprised of representatives from and partners with the following organizations: Ulster County Dept of the Environment, Ulster County Dept. of Health & Mental Health, Ulster County Dept. of Public Works, Ulster County Planning Dept., Ulster County Soil & Water District, the Ulster County Environmental Management Council, and the Cornell Cooperative Extension, in to protect and improve the waters of Ulster County and ensure the resilience of our watershed systems, and has been involved with local waterfront revitalization programs in the City of Kingston, the Village of Saugerties, and the Town of Esopus; and

WHEREAS, the HRWA has the staff, expertise, and ability to assist the RCWA, the WRWA and the Ulster County Water Quality Coordinating Committee;

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in fulfilling these goals and sharing the administrative responsibilities provided by hiring an administrative assistant whose duties would be to assist these groups in their daily functioning and to assist in creating and administrating their programs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2023 Ulster County Budget is hereby amended as follows for the purpose of providing funding to the Hudson River Watershed Alliance:

	<u>INCREASE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
AA.1310.1079-4300.4505 (App. #)	Professional Services Other Fees	\$35,000.00
AA.1310.1079-3400.4095 (Rev. #),	Federal Aid, ARPA	\$35,000.00

and, be it further

RESOLVED, in furtherance of this Resolution, a contract shall be executed between Hudson River Watershed Alliance and the County of Ulster through the Department of Finance, Division of Recovery and Resilience for administrative and programming support on behalf of the RCWA, the WRWA, and Ulster County Water Quality Committee,

and move its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

No Action Taken in Committee: Energy, Environment and Sustainability on March 2, 2023

Postponed in Committee: American Rescue Plan Act on March 8, 2023

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Passed Committee: American Rescue Plan Act on _____.

Passed Committee: Energy, Environment and Sustainability on _____.

Passed Committee: Ways and Means on _____.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

\$35,000.00 – 2023 COUNTY APPROPRIATIONS

\$35,000.00 – 2023 FEDERAL REVENUE DOLLARS