

**Opposing The New York State Governor's Proposal To Close State Parks And Historic Sites And Supporting The Continuous Operation Of All State Parks And Historic Sites**

Legislators Aiello, Belfiglio, Bernardo, Briggs, Donaldson, Fabiano, Felicello, Frey, Gerentine, Gregorius, Hansut, Harris, Hayes, Hochberg, Lomita, Loughran, Madsen, Maio, Maloney, Richard Parete, Robert Parete, Petit, Provenzano, Roberts, Rodriguez, Ronk, Shapiro, Sheeley, Stoeckeler, Sweeney, Terrizzi, Wadnola, and Zimet offer the following:

WHEREAS, in a February 19, 2010 press release by the Governor of the State of New York, the budget deficit proposal will also include the closing of state parks and numerous historic sites; if the Governor's proposed budget is adopted, more than 55 state parks and historic sites will close, and

WHEREAS, closings mean no hiking, no fishing, no swimming and no picnics this year and for years to come; such closings would not only make history but they would actually lose money for the state; if you close parks, you lose revenue, and

WHEREAS, every state agency must bear some cuts in this budget crisis but the parks agency has been hit harder than other; its operating budget has been cut 40 percent in the last three years; and the parks agency has said that restoration of just \$11 million of the \$29 million in proposed cuts will be enough to keep the parks open, and

WHEREAS, the Executive Director of Parks & Trails, New York, Robin Dropkin, states closing the state parks as recommended in the proposal would save "...four-thousandths of one percent of the total state budget..."(Times Union article dated February 21, 2010, staff writer Brian Nearing); this statement is juxtaposed with the fact that upwards of 55 million people visit the state parks annually; Park attendance was up by 1.9 million visitors in 2009 to more than 56 million, and

WHEREAS, at the same time proposed state park closings are being announced, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has mailed postcards to residents to promote the purchase of a \$65. Empire Passport for 2010; this permit provides "unlimited, day-use vehicle entry to most of New York's 179 state parks...", and

WHEREAS, according to the 2009 report, the New York State Park System: An Economic Asset to the Empire State, the state park system generates nearly \$1.9 billion every year in benefits for state and local economies; for every \$1 the state spends on the park system, \$5 in economic activity is produced; this activity supports 20,000 jobs (not including state park employees), and

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WHEREAS, park patrons shop, eat at restaurants and visit other local attractions in the park's neighboring communities; it is estimated that park visitors pay at least \$70 million in sales tax not to mention the other tax revenues generated indirectly by the economic spinoffs from parks, and

WHEREAS, Ulster County supports and funds tourism and economic development, and the retention of employment within its municipal boundaries, and

WHEREAS, for families in New York State who are already hit hard by the recession, the closing of state parks and reduction in services will eliminate local, outdoor activities that are available at minimal or no cost, and

WHEREAS, Ulster County especially promotes the use of public parks to attract tourist activity which also supports economic development and a quality of living in and throughout the County, and

WHEREAS, Ulster County depends on tourist activity to maintain current business enterprise dollars of \$471,000,000 and the ongoing employment of 8,000 jobs in the County, and

WHEREAS, the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation proposes to close or reduce hours at state parks and historic sites throughout New York State, potentially Minnewaska State Park in Kerhonkson, the Senate House in Kingston and the Walkway over the Hudson in the Town of Lloyd, in order to meet its goal for budget cuts, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature hereby opposes the closure or reduction in hours of any state parks and historic sites located within Ulster County and supports the continuous operation of state parks and historic sites which allows Ulster County residents important health and educational benefits and sustains tourism activity and economic development, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature shall forward copies of this resolution to Governor David Paterson, Senate Majority Leader Pedro Espada Jr., Senate Minority Leader Dean G. Skelos, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Assembly Majority Leader Ron Canestrari, Assembly Minority Leader Brian M. Kolb, New York State Senators John J. Bonacic and William J. Larkin, Jr., New York State Assemblymen Kevin A. Cahill, Clifford W. Crouch, Peter Lopez and Frank K. Skartados and the New York State Association of Counties,

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and move its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: 31 NOES: 0  
(Absent: Legislators Felicello and Zimet)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:  
UNKNOWN DECLINE IN REVENUE DOLLARS

0332

STATE OF NEW YORK  
ss:  
COUNTY OF ULSTER

This is to certify that I, the undersigned Clerk of the Legislature of the County of Ulster have compared the foregoing resolution with the original resolution now on file in the office of said clerk, and which was adopted by said Legislature on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2010, and that the same is a true and correct transcript of said resolution and of the whole thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of the County of Ulster this 18<sup>th</sup> Day of March in the year Two Thousand and Ten.

/s/ Karen L. Binder  
Karen L. Binder, Clerk  
Ulster County Legislature