



Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Environmental Protection Fund – SFY 2014-15

The Environmental Protection Fund is critical to every New Yorker, transcending all race, age, class, and gender differences. From Montauk to Buffalo, the EPF enhances the quality of life for everyone living in the Empire State. A 2012 analysis by The Trust for Public Land found for every \$1 of EPF funds invested in land and water protection, \$7 in economic benefits through natural goods and services is returned to the state of New York. The EPF supports thousands of jobs in our state from outdoor tourism and agriculture to drinking water protection. EPF-supported industries generate approximately \$40 billion in revenue every year.

EPF funding took a substantial hit during the economic down turn. The good news is the EPF's primary revenue source, the Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT), has been rebounding. This fiscal year, RETT is expected to generate \$750-800 million. In addition to the EPF, the RETT funds 1996 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act payments. Those payments are now being reduced, and the Bond Act payments will be \$12 million less this year than they were last year. **The RETT's recovery combined with the decrease in Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act payments should result in an increase in the EPF.**

Through the EPF, New York is conserving and enhancing farms, forests, rivers, beaches, and lakes. The EPF is supporting community parks, recycling programs, zoos and botanical gardens. EPF programs improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers. The programs attract businesses, create jobs and protect our water, air, and quality of life. Unfortunately, the dollars needed for these programs far outpaces appropriations and spending. Delays and long waiting lists for EPF projects continue to threaten opportunities to leverage millions of dollars from local, federal and private sources. The current proposal to fund the EPF at \$157 million for FY2014-15 is not enough to address the outstanding needs. A healthy economy is reliant on a healthy environment. **CCE urges the Legislature to increase the EPF to \$200 million.**

EPF Category Support

- **Suffolk County Water Quality:** The Executive budget includes \$2 million for Suffolk County water quality projects. CCE encourages the Legislature to keep this funding in the final budget agreement.
- **Ocean & Great Lakes:** New York has made real strides in improving our knowledge of our ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources since beginning the sub-category in 2005. Additional resources are needed to continue and expand the work to protect these critical economic treasures.
- **Pesticide Program Funding:** The EPF includes an additional \$200,000 for the pesticide program. CCE understands that this will be used for the implementation of the Long Island pesticide program. This is encouraging news, as the Long Island Pesticide Plan has been 14 years in the making.

CCE SUPPORTS A \$200 MILLION ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND

CCE is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment.