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New York State Conservation Council Inc.
8 East Main Street, Ilion, New York 13357-1899

January 29th, 2014 New York State Senate and Assembly
Joint Budget Proposal Hearing on
Department of Environmental Conservation Funding

For over 80 years, the New York State Conservation Council, Inc. has been a leader in advocating the wise use and management of New York's valuable natural resources to ensure that they are protected for our children's children. The Council supports the sound management principles of New York's fish and wildlife and their natural habitats. We believe in Conservation, which we see as the wise use of our renewable natural resources.

The New York State Conservation Council, represent over 300,000 sportsmen and outdoor enthusiast throughout New York State. While we are not alone in representing the sportsmen, we are one of the largest if not the largest sportsmen advocate groups in New York. We also believe our points of view go well beyond our membership and represent the vast majority of all sportsmen and outdoor enthusiasts In New York State.

The Governor in his State of the State Message mentioned that there is a 8.2 billion dollar economic impact to New York from hunting, fishing and trapping. We are pleased that he governor realizes that there is this 8.2 billion impact. It shows that we and what we accomplish through hunting, fishing and trapping deserves the support of the state and what is being offered in this year's budget. This amount shows that there is a positive feedback from investments made by the state. We as tax payers get a great return on the states (our) investment in the NYS DEC.

The Environmental Conservation portion of the budget is vast. I would like to comment on six items concerning conservation. These items have long been on the bucket list of many a concerned sportsmen and sportsmen group.

1. **The DEC, Department of Environmental Conservation** deserves full funding as proposed by the Governor's budget. In fact we would like to see more. Through the sportsmen's license fees and resulting matching funding we do much to support the efforts of wise conservation. The economic impact of money budgeted to the DEC gives a positive return. To fully realize this positive impact we need to support the infrastructure within DEC. This infrastructure includes the proper staffing necessary for them to do the best job possible.
2. **The State Fish Hatcheries Repairs**, the \$7.5 million listed in the Governor's Capitol Plan under reapportionments is not an unrealistic number - it is a needed number for normal maintenance to keep our hatcheries functional for now and the future. (A long time concern of the Sportsmen.)

3. **The Crossbow**, needs to be recognized as a legal hunting implement, and the Governor promoting that the NYS DEC should determine how it will be used is long overdue. The ability to use the crossbow for hunting has had the support of the majority of our sportsmen.
4. **The 500ft To 150 Ft Shooting Distance Reduction for Archers from Structures**, is another logical proposal. It offers adequate safety and increased opportunity to manage and harvest wildlife.
5. **Fifty Proposed Access projects**, access is a key element for sportsmen to be able to hunt, fish, and trap. More access leads to more license sales, which translates more money to be used for conservation and wise resource management.
6. **Liability relief for Landowners**, would open up more opportunities for the sportsmen to hunt, fish, and trap. The opportunity for land owner to manage his lands soundly without subjecting themselves to undue legal liabilities. While New York State is well recognized nationally for the opportunity to hunt fish and trap and its availability of quality public lands, the availability to hunt private lands offers additional opportunity for quality hunting and fishing.

We the Council, appreciate the support the State Senate and the State Assembly has offered over the years. I hope that the legislative members at this hearing today can convince their colleagues to support all of the Environmental Conservation funding and legislative initiatives presented under Governor's 2014 State Budget.

Respectfully submitted,

A Charles Parker
President, New York State Conservation Council

See addendum;

The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation has seven principles concerning wildlife. Four of these principles I feel relate directly to today's hearing;

#1 – Wildlife is Held in the Public Trust.

#3 – Democratic Rule of Law

Hunting and fishing laws are created through the public process where everyone has the opportunity and responsibility to develop systems of wildlife conservation and use.

#4 – Hunting Opportunity for All

Every citizen has an opportunity, under the law, to hunt and fish in the United States and Canada.

And most important today is

#7 – Scientific Management

Sound science is essential to managing and sustaining North America's wildlife and habitats.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and their biologists under the Division of Fish Wildlife and Marine Resources are the experts with the science for the discharge of sound wildlife management policy.

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