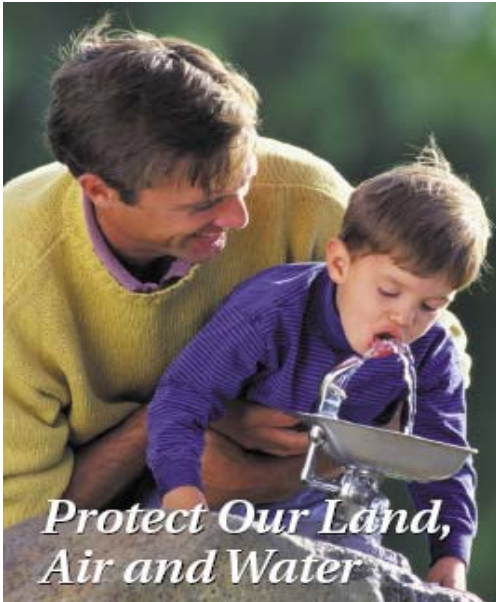


The Friends of New York's Environment

Protecting our land, air and water

The Friends of New York's Environment, a broad partnership of over 100 environmental, health, agricultural, recreational and community stakeholder groups are committed to working together to secure increases in dedicated funding to protect our land, air and water thereby safeguarding New Yorkers' health, economy and environment.



*Protect Our Land,
Air and Water*

There is Urgent and Significant Need for Environmental Funding In Every Region of New York State

The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), a pivotal funding source for the state's premier environmental programs, has been disproportionately targeted for reductions in the Executive Proposed Budget for SFY2010-11. *The Friends of New York's Environment* urge State leaders to continue their dedication to New York's environment, economy and public health by restoring EPF appropriations during negotiations on the next state budget.

EPF investments are not only protecting our natural resources and public health, they are also playing an important role in New York's economic recovery. Programs funded by the EPF create jobs, eliminate solid waste, prevent pollution, provide clean drinking water, protect ecosystems and community character for generations to come, and connect communities and children with the outdoors. Every county

of New York state benefits from EPF funded programs and projects.

The EPF has created or protected thousands of jobs in sectors including but not limited to farming, engineering, solid waste management, education, science, land management, forestry, and tourism in every county of New York State.

The need to sufficiently protect our health and environment, better manage our natural resources, and make our urban centers more sustainable grows stronger with each passing day. The deep cuts or eliminations proposed for many core EPF programs in the Executive Budget proposal threaten the integrity of the Fund and the ability of the state to protect New York's land, air and water which keep our communities healthy and attractive to tourists, businesses and residents alike. Everyone benefits from healthy forests, farms, parks, waterways, clean air, and accessible waterfronts. Investing in programs that protect the environment can enhance New York's economic recovery by creating jobs, preventing local property tax increases, increasing property values, and boosting tourism in every corner of the State. **Funding for EPF programs must be restored to continue to keep the Empire State great.**



*Protect our environmental
legacy for future generations*

Photo: Kim Keirnan, Audubon NY

New York must take action to address environmental funding needs.

As the Legislature and Executive negotiate the next state budget, the ***Friends of New York's Environment*** offer the following strategies for restoring investments in the state's environmental future.

The Friends of New York's Environment requests that you restore the EPF appropriation to \$222 million in FY2010-11. The Executive Budget proposal for SFY2010-11 cuts the EPF by 33% from the last fiscal year's appropriation, and 52% from the EPF appropriation level scheduled for this year under the EPF Enhancement Act (passed in 2007.) This reduction is disproportionately larger than reductions proposed for other sectors of the budget. Considering the wide ranging benefits provided by the EPF and its benefits to every county in the State, the Friends of New York's Environment respectfully requests that you work with your colleagues during the budget negotiation process to include \$222 million in the EPF for SFY2010-2011. Even at \$222 million, the appropriation would represent a 26% decrease from the level it was scheduled to reach by 2010 under the EPF Enhancement Act.

The Friends of New York's Environment requests that you remove "offloads" from the EPF that threaten the integrity of the Fund. The budget proposal threatens the integrity of the EPF by offloading programs, including the payment of state taxes on public lands and projects at state parks and historic sites. The Friends of New York's Environment have had a long standing position that no new categories be added to the EPF without the addition of new funding to support them. While these programs are important, they are normally paid for through the General Fund and the State Parks Infrastructure Fund respectively. Including these programs in the EPF represents another cut since they take away funding that should be used on existing EPF programs. Therefore, these programs should not be inserted into the EPF. We request that these offloads be removed from the EPF and funded through their traditional revenue sources.

The Friends of New York's Environment requests that a payback plan for the funding that was swept from the EPF in past years be included in the FY2010-11 budget. During the last seven years, almost \$500 million of dedicated environmental funding has been transferred from the EPF and spent on other non-environmental programs. We request that the SFY2010-11 budget include a multi-year repayment plan with an annual increase in the amount of Real Estate Transfer Tax funding dedicated to the EPF to ensure that the State can fulfill its current commitments and utilize new appropriations to fund new projects and provide ongoing support to current programs.

While new capital appropriations primarily look ahead to meeting future environmental challenges, today New York State is struggling to honor its *existing* obligations based on the nearly half billion dollars that has been transferred from the EPF for general budget relief. Without properly addressing repayment of previously diverted EPF funds, the State runs the risk of exhausting future appropriations on previous commitments, risking progress on new projects. The importance of repayment of EPF funds and has provided through legislatively approved language authorizing repayment in prior budgets. We believe it is time to create a plan to begin the authorized repayments.

As you know, New York has been forced to triage state payments based on the current fiscal crisis. As a result, state payments to EPF-supported projects have been delayed. Hundreds of local governments and not-for-profits are currently relying on New York to fulfill its obligations. Over time, New York has entered into thousands of commitments and now does not have the cash to back them up. Simply put, the EPF is overdrawn and a new cash infusion is needed to make good on state promises.

Thank you for your work to protect New York's land, air and water!