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## **STATEMENT FROM THE FRIENDS OF NEW YORK'S ENVIRONMENT ON THE FY13-14 LEGISLATIVE BUDGET PROPOSALS**

The Friends of New York's Environment, a broad partnership of more than 100 environmental, public health, agricultural conservation, recreational and urban stakeholder groups, applauds and thanks the Senate and Assembly for their budget proposals, which enhance the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) in the 2013-14 State Budget. Especially encouraging is that all three budget proposals - by the Executive, the Senate and the Assembly – include an increased appropriation for the EPF. These proposals are the first step toward reaching the shared goal of the environmental community and state leaders to continue to enhance the EPF in future years.

While the Executive and Senate budget proposals include a \$19 million enhancement - providing \$153 million for EPF programs across the state in the next fiscal year - the Assembly proposal goes even further, and provides a \$24 million increase for a total EPF appropriation of \$158 million. This proposed increase is supported by new revenue generated through an expansion of the Bottle Bill, one of the state's most successful recycling programs.

By expanding the Bottle Bill and further enhancing the EPF, the Assembly proposal will leverage even greater benefits from important EPF projects in every county of New York State, while also making our communities cleaner and increasing recycling. The Friends of New York's Environment encourage the Governor and Legislature to work to ensure an enhanced EPF is included in the enacted state budget, and support the expansion of the Bottle Bill as a way to maximize this year's opportunity to bring new resources to critical programs that benefit every region of New York.

What is most encouraging is that all three of these budget proposals highlight an understanding by state leaders of the important role environmental programs play in conserving natural resources, growing economic prosperity, and providing disaster recovery and preparedness strategies to communities. When it comes to the EPF, what's good for the environment is also good for the state's economy. According to a recent study by the Trust for Public Land, EPF programs deliver a \$7 return for every \$1 invested, which translates into a stronger New York.

The Friends of New York's Environment look forward to working with the Governor and the Legislature throughout the remainder of the budget process to achieve this critical investment in New York's environment and economy as part of the 2013-14 State Budget.