

November 10, 2009

Hon. David Paterson
Hon. Martin Golden
Hon. Peter Abbate
Hon. Alec Brook-Krasny
Hon. Dov Hikind
Governor and Legislature
New York State Capitol
Albany, New York

Re: Urgent Call to Action

Dear Governor, Senator and Assemblymembers;

As an active Dyker Heights resident and concerned citizen of New York State, I am taking time to write to you with concern for the environment and with hopes and expectations that you will act appropriately to defend and protect our air and waters. Environmental concerns are among the key factors in my decisions when I vote. I know many of my neighbors believe as I do that attention needs to be paid to our waters and the time to act is now.

A New York Times article on September 13, 2009 confirmed that the number of regulated polluters in New York has almost doubled to 19,000 in the last decade, but the number of inspections each year has remained the same. The article also stated that untreated waste flows into our waters because sewers cannot handle volume. I know this is true because I can tell it happens every time it rains. I would hope that you and your colleagues will help ameliorate these problems by supporting an agency that I have learned has been addressing this problem and been of great assistance to the State.

The Interstate Environmental Commission (IEC) conducts outreach and education in the field, but apparently and more importantly performs a great service to our community and our State without much fanfare or funding. While States are holding the line or reducing monitoring of water quality, the IEC has increased its monitoring over the years and provides much needed data to the City and State agencies such as the Department of Environmental Conservation. The IEC also has a call-in number when there are concerns in the community and maintains many records of importance. IEC is a great resource that should continue to provide service to our State and help burdened State and local agencies.

New York needs the IEC more than ever to conduct inspections of wastewater treatment plants and industrial facilities that release into our waters and to test the waters. I know that the IEC has its own independent research vessel and a laboratory at the College of Staten Island. The IEC does more than supplement other agencies' work as it also conducts unannounced inspections and performs independent analysis.

The IEC has a modest, but highly skilled, qualified, certified, thoroughly credentialed staff that cares about our waters. The staff is able to conduct valuable analysis and give reliable information. We understand they are also involved in emerging fields of study including green technologies, emerging pollutants, and finding a way to treat wastewater with minimal to no effects to delicate environs. These are important activities and the IEC's involvement with other agencies in and around the State can only help the State in terms of public health and safety.

Examining last year's budget was an eye-opener. It was truly disheartening to see that New York did not live up to its part of the tri-state compact. I recognize the difficult financial times call for difficult decisions, but the \$15,000 appropriated, which I understand was the 1936 statutory minimum, was shameful and damaging to our environment. The IEC not only advances science, but helps our communities and improves public health. Their work is important to me and to all of our children. We understand that the IEC requests less than \$500,000 for an entire year from New York. Given the size of New York's budget, and the spending in discretionary areas, it is astounding that the IEC has not received the full and enthusiastic support of the State.

I urge you to include a full appropriation for the IEC in your budget and hope you will see to it that the IEC receives the resources it needs to continue its good work. I and my neighbors will watch the budget process intently as we always do and hope we can count on your support for the environment and for the IEC.

Your reply, and more importantly, your action would be appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Very truly yours,

Dyker Heights Resident and Voter