

Adirondack Mountain Club • American Rivers • Audubon New York • Audubon Society of the Capital Region • Buffalo Audubon Society • Central Westchester Audubon Society • Citizens Campaign for the Environment • Conservation Alliance of New York • Conservation Fund Advisory Board • County Seat Conservation Club • Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society • Ducks Unlimited • Eastern Long Island Audubon Society • Environment New York • Environmental Advocates of New York • Four Harbors Audubon • Friends of the Bay • Friends of the Washington County Grasslands IBA • Genesee Valley Audubon Society • Great Lakes Research Consortium • Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council • Great South Bay Audubon Society • Greenmantle • Hudson Highlands Land Trust • Hudson River Audubon • Huntington Audubon Society • Lake Champlain Chapter Trout Unlimited • Lake Ontario Trout & Salmon Association • Land Trust Alliance • National Parks Conservation Association • National Wildlife Federation • Natural Resources Defense Council • New York City Audubon • New York State Council of Trout Unlimited • New York State Council of Trout Unlimited • New York State Trappers Association • Niagara River Anglers Association • Niagara Watershed Alliance • North Forest Rod & Gun Club • North Fork Audubon Society • North Shore Audubon Society • Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society • Northern Catskills Audubon Society • NY Chapter of the Wildlife Society • NY State Trout Unlimited • NYS 4-H Shooting Sports Program • Onondaga Audubon • Orange County Audubon Society, Inc • Orange County Federation of Sportsman's Clubs • Scenic Hudson • Stewart Park and Reserve Coalition, Inc • South Shore Audubon Society • Southern Adirondack Audubon • Sportsmen's Club of Northern Westchester • The Nature Conservancy in New York • Upper Susquehanna Coalition of Soil and Water Conservation Districts • West Falls Conservation Society • Western New York Environmental Federation • Wildlife Conservation Society • The Wildlife Society

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

The Honorable Dean Skelos
Majority Leader
New York State Senate
330 State Capitol
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Sheldon Silver
Speaker
New York State Assembly
932 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248

The Honorable John DeFrancisco
Chairman, Finance Committee
New York State Senate
416 Capitol
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Herman D. Farrell, Jr.
Chairman, Ways and Means Committee
New York State Assembly
923 legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248

June 14, 2012

Dear Governor Cuomo, Majority Leader Skelos, Speaker Silver, Chairman DeFrancisco and Chairman Farrell,

The undersigned organizations are deeply concerned with recently reports that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service is withholding over \$20 million dollars in federal aid through the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration funds due to a provision included in Section 13-a of Part U of the Revenue Article VII ([S6259-D/A9059-D](#)) in the enacted FY 2012-2013 state budget.¹ While we appreciate your attention to this issue in the recently passed state budget, further amendments are needed to ensure the state remains eligible to receive these vital federal dollars. We respectfully request that you work expeditiously to rectify this situation before the end of the 2012 Legislative Session.

¹ “§ 13-a. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, and in accordance with section 4 of the state finance law, the comptroller is hereby authorized and directed to transfer, at the request of the director of the budget, up to \$38 million from the unencumbered balance of any special revenue fund or account, or combination of funds and accounts, to the community projects fund. The amounts transferred pursuant to this.”

These federal funding programs provide critical support to protect and restore wildlife and natural resources that are important for New York's environmental quality and economy. In particular, the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Fund provides resources for the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to maintain and enhance Wildlife Management Areas and their facilities for the benefit of both game and non-game bird and wildlife species. The Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Fund provides support for the Department to enhance our economically important sport fishing industry, including wetland habitat restoration and delineation, and research into the health of our fisheries. With recent cuts to the DEC's non-personal service budget, the agency relies more heavily on this federal aid to advance conservation of wildlife and fish species which are important for tourism and recreation in New York State.

Wildlife associated recreation is big business in New York. According to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's "2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation," in New York over 5 million people hunt, fish or watch wildlife, contributing well over \$3 billion to the state economy each year, supporting tens of thousands of jobs across the state. In order to continue to provide residents and tourists with quality experiences in nature and reap the economic benefits of these activities, the state must continue to invest in habitat and species management initiatives, and must remain eligible to receive federal funding to support this work.

We strongly urge you to take supplemental action during the remainder of the 2012 Legislative Session to amend the FY 2012 -2013 budget to ensure New York remains in compliance with the federal government's matching requirements for these programs by clarifying that no State funds can be transferred that will result in the state becoming ineligible for federal funds, and ensures that the Conservation Fund revenues are utilized for their intended purposes. Thank you for your urgent attention to this important conservation matter.

Sincerely,

Albert E. Caccese
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Jason Kemper
Chairman
Conservation Fund Advisory Board

Bill Ulfelder
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Northern Catskills Audubon Society

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Individuals

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Jennifer Buckley
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Grand Island Rod and Gun Club

Matt Piontkowski
East Amherst, NY

Charles F. Tiranno

Cc:

Mylan Denerstein, Counsel to the Governor

Robert L. Megna, Budget Director

Robert Hallman, Deputy Secretary for Energy and the Environment

Basil Seggos, Assistant Secretary for the Environment

Joseph Martens, Commissioner, NYS DEC

Senator Mark Grisanti, Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Chair

Assemblyman Robert Sweeney, Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee Chair