

FAST FACTS: Budget Cuts, Impacts on Residents, and Solutions

CUTS TO THE NJ DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (NJDEP)

- The governor's proposed budget would cut the NJDEP's budget by 12.5% and eliminate almost 2-300 jobs at the agency.
- In the 1990's under Governor Whitman the budget was cut by almost a third and a quarter of the staff was laid off, and the agency has not recovered from those losses. In the past five years, an additional 400 jobs have been lost due to hiring freezes. The NJDEP simply cannot sustain yet another cut & continue to effectively protect the state's environment.
- The NJDEP's Division of Parks and Forestry has 40% fewer staff members than it did in 1994 and 40% more land to manage.
- The NJDEP constitutes only 0.7% of the overall state budget. Because of fines, fees, permits, and federal grants, the department is 90% self-sustaining with only 10% of its budget coming from general state funds.
- In fact, cutting NJDEP will cause the state to LOSE money. The state currently receives federal monies both in the form of matching funds, which will be lost if the state funding is not available.

CUTS TO NJDEP'S DIVISION OF PARKS & FORESTRY: Hurts \$3.8 billion fishing, hunting & ecotourist economy

- NJDEP has announced that the proposed budget cuts would result in the closing of 9 state parks & portions of 3 other parks. These include Monmouth Battlefield State Park, High Point State Park, Brendan T. Byrne State Forest, Jenny Jump State Forest, Round Valley Recreation Area, Stephens State Park, Worthington State Forest, Parvin State Park, Fort Mott (including Hancock House), Bulls Island Recreation Area at D&R Canal State Park, and Shepherd's Lake Recreation Area at Ringwood State Park. Washington Crossing State Park will also have reduced hours & services.
- Closure of public parks will disproportionately affect low and middle-income families who do not have access to private facilities.
- 17 million people visit New Jersey's state parks every year, adding \$3.9 billion to the state's economy through their wildlife watching, hunting and fishing activities alone.
- Cuts in parks funding ignore the demonstrated will of the people, who have repeatedly voted to fund preservation programs.

CUTS TO NJDEP'S DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE: Hurts \$841 million tourist economy

- Budget cuts & staffing shortages will reduce recreational opportunities & harm the state's ability to care for wildlife species.
- Many businesses across the state rely on wildlife recreation-related income. Legislators must ensure that these dollars continue to be spent in NJ and not be drawn elsewhere.
- Saltwater fishing alone involves over a million people each year, adding \$841 million to the state's economy and substantially impacting our tourism industry.
- NJ is a haven for over 70 species of wildlife considered endangered or threatened. Allowing these species to decline to the point where they are required to be protected by law will result in more costly management.

UNCERTAIN FUTURE FOR NJ'S Open Space, Farmland and Historic Preservation

- Since its creation in 1998, the Garden State Preservation Trust has preserved over 432,000 acres of parks, open space & farmland but will grind to a halt as it runs out of money this year unless it is renewed and strengthened.
- New Jersey voters approved one-year of stop gap funding (2007 ballot question #3) sending a clear message to our leaders that continued funding for preservation is a priority during fiscally challenging times.

Alternative Solutions to Proposed Budget	Amount Raised
Set pollution permit fees to better reflect the true cost of environmental, economic (clean water-reliant industries leaving the state due to water supply problems) and health damage	Billions – North Jersey Water Supply Authority has estimated it will cost an additional \$100 billion over the next 50 years in additional treatment costs alone without stronger source water protections
Establish \$100 annual surcharge on the heaviest, least fuel efficient SUV's, cars, and light trucks	\$50 million per year (the most wasteful 10% of 5 million vehicles @ \$100/year).
Stop funding sprawl, such as Encap and Xanadu	Millions -- Encap alone has cost the state 10's of millions of dollars.
Create a \$50 registration fee for All Terrain Vehicles.	\$5 million.
Complete campaign ethics reforms, including banning pay to play, cutting exorbitant benefits for part-time municipal, professional engineers and lawyers.	\$6.4 million if \$10,000 per year pension and health ins. benefits are eliminated for 640 part-time, private engineers and lawyers consulting for towns.
Eliminate "christmas tree" items.	Over \$100 million/year in FY08 and over \$300 million/year in FY07
Make utilities and leasees of state parkland pay true market rate	Millions -- \$750,000 in back rent at just one state park where less than 20% of leasees are current on their rent and over 80% of leases have expired
Un-privatize Department of Transportation engineering work.	The state's own studies say \$35 million can be saved.
Eliminate 10% of state political appointees earning over \$75,000	\$2 million.
Bulk purchase pharmaceuticals for state workers.	Up to \$75 million per year.