



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY, NY 12224



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

January 22, 2010

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
The White House
Washington, DC, 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary is one of the country's Estuaries of National Significance, and includes New York Harbor, Jamaica Bay, the Raritan River, and the Hudson River to the head of tide. This historic region, so closely tied to the birth and development of our nation, provides important resources to more than 15 million people in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area and the Hudson Valley region of New York State, including drinking water, recreation and commercial opportunities. The Estuary also provides unique habitats for aquatic and terrestrial species that are threatened or endangered or of significant recreational and commercial value. It includes the National Park Service's Gateway National Recreation Area, which is one of the largest coastal wetland systems in New York State and a key link in the Atlantic Flyway migratory route for wildlife.

Unfortunately, these invaluable natural resources have been degraded through a combination of sea level rise, fill and development, and historic pollution. State and local governments already provide significant funds to protect and restore the Estuary's natural resources and water quality. In recent years, we have greatly improved wastewater treatment, rebuilt wetlands in Jamaica Bay and along the Hudson River, and have broken ground on new City and State parks that have allowed hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers to get to and on the water. Working in concert with our federal partners, we have also undertaken numerous small-scale projects to protect and restore habitats of the Hudson River.

We are encouraged by your Administration's focus on large-scale ecosystem restoration efforts, and ask you to include \$52 million in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's FY 2011 budget for ecological restoration of the nationally-important New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary. The EPA's FY 2010 budget now includes significant funding for the Great Lakes (\$475 million), Puget Sound (\$50 million), Chesapeake Bay (\$50 million), and other water bodies and watersheds that are used by far fewer people. Recognizing that the Governors of Maryland and Virginia recently wrote to you to request an increase in federal funds for Chesapeake Bay to \$365 million for FY 2011, we believe that the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary similarly merits a higher level of funds than it currently secures under the National Estuary Program.

The foundation for restoration of the Estuary has been set forth in at least four existing plans, including plans developed in partnership with the Federal government. For example, the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Estuary was funded through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) National Estuary Program, which designates the Estuary and 25 others nationwide to be of national significance but provides less than \$1 million a year for planning per estuary. The time has arrived for implementing plans such as the Hudson-Raritan Estuary Comprehensive Restoration Plan (prepared by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the Army Corp of Engineers in partnership with the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program) and the related Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda (developed by New York State in conjunction with federal, local, and not-for-profit partners).

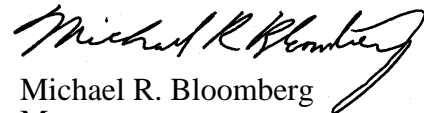
In addition to numerous ecological, environmental justice, and recreational benefits, this investment would create or retain broader economic activity. The Port of New York and New Jersey provides 230,000 jobs to this region, along with \$20 billion in economic activity to the two states, all possible because of the Estuary and its natural resources. Restoration of this resource would maintain its economic vitality, and the restoration activities themselves would also provide much-needed jobs in the New York Metropolitan area. Through the plans which already have been developed, many projects could be implemented right away. Our many partners in the restoration and protection of the Estuary and its critical ecosystems are willing and able to begin immediately to share the workload and financial commitment needed to implement our vision to restore the Estuary. These partners – including the EPA, NOAA, the Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Park Service, the States of New Jersey and New York, the City of New York, other municipalities, interstate agencies, public authorities, special districts, scientific researchers, user groups, environmental organizations, as well as industry and other interested organizations and individuals – have the talent and abilities needed to undertake the Estuary's restoration.

In summary, we ask that you include \$52 million in the EPA's FY 2011 budget to be used for the coordination and implementation of the restoration plans described above. Thank you for your attention to this issue, and we look forward to working with you, your staff and Cabinet, and our colleagues in Congress as the budget and subsequent appropriations processes develop.

Sincerely,



David A. Paterson
Governor



Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

cc: New York Congressional Delegation
Ms. Nancy Sutley, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality
Ms. Lisa Jackson, Administrator, United States Environmental Protection Agency