



Riverkeeper's SFY 2020-2021 Budget Priorities

CLEAN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE ACT - \$1 billion for Clean Water

New York State has over an \$80 billion need for water infrastructure investments over the next 20 years, the largest in the nation. The infrastructure investments made through the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act (WIIA) via the Clean Water Infrastructure Act (CWIA) are the biggest New York State investment in this critical priority in a generation. In his 2019 State of the State, the Governor's proposed doubling of the commitment to CWIA to \$5 billion marks a historic commitment to protect New York's waters. We encourage an increase in commitment to a \$1 billion investment in the FY 2020-21 budget to meet the scale of the clean water challenges facing the state

HUDSON RIVER BIOLOGICAL MONITORING PROGRAM - \$1 Million

As part of the Hudson River Settlement Agreement of 1980, the operators of Indian Point and other power plants in the Hudson Valley were required to conduct an annual Hudson River Biological Monitoring Program ("Hudson River BMP") to track the status of important fish species. With the shuttering of Indian Point utility companies will no longer conduct (or fund) the Hudson River BMP. The Hudson River BMP is the most comprehensive continuous fish survey in the world. It encompasses the entire estuarine portion of the Hudson River and had been continuously conducted for four decades. It is simply the best long-term fish ecology survey of any temperate estuary.

We propose the provision of \$1 million per year for the continuation of the Hudson River Biological Monitoring Program, under the auspices of New York State and an advisory committee of scientists and river advocacy organizations.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION STAFFING

DEC staff and budget must be increased after decades of attrition, in order to meet the increasingly numerous and complex water challenges the agency faces. For example, the DEC Division of Water has experienced the steepest decline over a 10-year period, with a loss of 59 positions, or 21%. The Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources has seen a decline of 58 staff positions since 2008, a 13% drop in staff resources. Environmental Conservation Police Officers have experienced a loss of 44 positions as of October 2018 from a 2008 high of 333, also a 13% drop in staff resources. The DEC is increasingly asked to fill in the vacuum but they are underfunded and staffing needs are greater than ever.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND - \$350 MILLION

The historic sustained funding level of the EPF should be increased in SFY 2020-2021 to a funding level of \$350 million and increased year by year to \$500 million. Below are specific line items.

HUDSON RIVER ESTUARY PROGRAM - \$13 Million (EPF)

For 30 years, the Hudson River Estuary Program has provided indispensable technical assistance and community grants to support a model, stakeholder-driven collaborative management program for the region. Both the Hudson River Estuary Program and the Mohawk Basin Program will begin

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implementing new Action Agendas in this fiscal year. Riverkeeper supports increase to \$13 million for the Hudson River Estuary Program, including \$1 million for the Mohawk Basin Program.

- Hudson River monitoring project, a landmark proposal to finally establish baseline water quality conditions for the river - \$1 million
- Harmful Algal Blooms response, including Wallkill River clean water plan, will need approximately \$500,000
- Support of the Governor's Revive Mother Nature initiative, particularly dam removal to restore historic migratory fish habitat - \$500,000

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM - \$15 MILLION (EPF)

The Waterfront Revitalization Program is an important source of community-led watershed management funding for communities statewide and received \$14.5 million in the FY 2019-20 budget. Riverkeeper urges the restoration of funding to FY 2018-19 level of \$15 million, but notes that the popular program warrants further growth. The Program funds community grants to plan for and implement both waterfront revitalization and watershed management projects.

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM - \$18.25 MILLION (EPF)

The Water Quality Improvement Program received a \$500,000 cut in the FY 2019-20 budget to \$17.75 million. We urge the restoration of this funding. The program is, along with the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act, a key source of needed grants to support community investments in wastewater infrastructure. Significant Clean Water Infrastructure Act funds are spent via the Water Quality Improvement Program, but the terms of Water Quality Improvement Program grants are more favorable to communities, typically allowing for less local match and greater state investment per project. We support the following specific allocations within WQIP:

- Source Water Assessments at \$5 million into the next fiscal year.
- Newburgh source water mapping: \$250,000

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