



Riverkeeper's SFY 2021-2022 Budget Priorities

ENVIRONMENTAL BOND ACT - \$3 BILLION

Riverkeeper urges Governor Cuomo and the legislature to include the \$3 billion Restore Mother Nature Bond Act in his next Executive Budget. While the Hudson River Estuary has undoubtedly become cleaner in the past several decades, at the same time the Hudson's most iconic fish species have experienced dramatic declines. Of nineteen species examined, one species has left the Hudson completely, two are on the verge of extirpation, one shows a slight uptick, and the rest show significant to severe declines. An [analysis](#) by the firm AECOM found that bond act spending could support 65,000 jobs injecting \$6.7 billion in total project spending. This includes \$1.6 billion in clean water projects resulting in 18,000 statewide jobs, \$1 billion in projects to fight climate change supporting 11,500 jobs, and \$3.25 billion in restoration and flood reduction projects supporting 30,600 jobs. The bond act presents an opportunity to make investments that will benefit New York's environment for generations to come.

CLEAN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE ACT - \$500 MILLION

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. This year's proposal for an additional \$500 million continues to make good on the Governor's commitment to appropriations. However, a recent [report](#) from Comptroller DiNapoli indicates that less than 11 percent of the \$3.9 billion appropriated has been spent. As of March 11, 2020 only \$420 million have been spent on infrastructure projects. We urge Governor Cuomo to speed up the disbursement of infrastructure funding, while continuing to support continued appropriations.

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. As DEC's capital budget and mandates have increased, their staffing numbers have declined. Between 2009 and 2020 DEC lost over 700 staffers or around 20 percent of the total work force. 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 - \$300 MILLION

The historic sustained funding level of the EPF should be maintained in the SFY 2021-2022 budget to a funding level of \$300 million. Below are specific line items.

HUDSON RIVER ESTUARY PROGRAM - \$7.5 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

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region. Both the Hudson River Estuary Program and the Mohawk Basin Program will begin implementing new Action Agendas in this fiscal year. Riverkeeper encourages stable funding for the Hudson River Estuary Program, including \$1 million for the Mohawk Basin Program.

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM - \$14.25 MILLION (EPF)

The Waterfront Revitalization Program is an important source of community-led watershed management funding for communities statewide and received The Program funds community grants to plan for and implement both waterfront revitalization and watershed management projects. Riverkeeper supports the Governor's proposal to increase this line by \$400,000.

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PROGRAM - \$19 MILLION (EPF)

The Water Quality Improvement Project Program 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 Infrastructure Improve Act (WIIA), 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. Within the WQIP program we support the Source Water Assessments line at \$5 million into the next fiscal year.

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