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Orange County Open Space Alliance

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July 24, 2007

Mr. Gregory W. Townsend
Orange County Legislature
255 Main Street
Goshen, NY 10924

Re: Thank you for voting yea on the CPA resolutions

Dear Mr. Townsend:

The Orange County Open Space Alliance (OCOSA) is an alliance of organizations interested in the active preservation of open space in Orange County including:

Bashakill Area Association, Citizens for Open Space, Greenville Residents for Informed Planning, Hudson Highlands Land Trust, Moodna Watershed Coalition, NY/NJ Trail Conference, Open Space Institute, Orange Co. Audubon, Orange Co. Land Trust, Orange County Federation of Sportsmen, Orange Environment, Scenic Hudson Land Trust, Inc., SPARC, Sterling Forest Partnership, The Highlands Coalition, The Nature Conservancy, The Preservation Collective, Trust for Public Land, Wallkill River Task Force, and Warwick Conservancy.

We'd like to express our appreciation to you for your support in voting (twice) to include Orange County in the Hudson Valley Community Preservation Act and demonstrating your understanding of the importance of preserving open space, recreational land and farmland in our beautiful county, which looks like it's back in the lead for "fastest-growing" county in the state.

It's anticipated that recent passage of the New Jersey Highlands Protection Act will increase the already great pressure on us by diverting development from the NJ protection area to southern NY, especially Orange County. However, upholding the home rule principle and allowing our towns to vote on transfer tax referenda will help stem the tide of suburbanization and loss of agriculture in our still-lovely county.

The Mission of the Orange County Open Space Alliance is to foster open space in Orange County by:

- ◆ Supporting local initiatives engaged in open space preservation
- ◆ Increasing public awareness of the importance of open space
- ◆ Encouraging open space planning at the local and countywide levels
- ◆ Fostering efforts to raise funds for open space
- ◆ Coordinating communication among groups working for open space

If towns pass such tax referenda, they will then have funds in place to match and therefore make available to them our county monies, reinforcing the effectiveness of that important program.

Concerns about affordability are largely addressed by the proposed legislation by only allowing the portion of a house price above the county median to be taxed. And the unanimously adopted OC Open Space Plan points out that preservation of open space, which is tax-positive, can be used by municipalities to help control property tax increases, another affordability concern.

Transfer fees will give another important funding stream in the effort to preserve what we love about OC, as evidenced in the dozens of plans, studies and documents calling for open space and farmland preservation.

We hope that you'll continue to let Senators Larkin and Bonacic (and Co. Executive Ed Diana) know how you feel, and thank you for your support of this measure.

Sincerely,



John Gebhards
Corresponding Secretary

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