



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 5, 2022

## **STATEMENT FROM PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK ON GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL'S 2022 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS**

(ALBANY, NY) - At today's State of the State address, Governor Hochul charted a bold vision for continuing the great investments in recent years that New York State has made in our parks, trails, and shared green space over the past decade.

We are excited by the many initiatives she proposed to continue this work, including:

- Increasing the Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Bond Act to \$4 Billion, providing critical funding for climate change mitigation,
- Committing capital funding for core State Park improvements, rebuilding the capacity of our parks,
- Completing the Albany Skyway and replacing the Livingston Avenue Railroad Bridge in Albany, connecting pedestrians and bicyclists to, and providing a safe pathway across, the Hudson River,
- Advancing the ROC the Riverway project, including through the creation of Rochester High Falls State Park along the Genesee River in downtown Rochester,
- Completing the 51-mile Westchester RiverWalk by closing a crucial 1-mile gap in Tarrytown, increasing access to the riverfront and to nearby historic sites, and
- Continuing the revitalization of New York's Historic Erie Canal system through continued investment in the Reimagine the Canals initiative

With the impending threat of climate change looming, it is critical that the state continue and advance its strong work to protect the environment. The Governor's proposal lays out critical steps to do that, and we applaud the inclusion of these measures. Notably, the Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Bond Act would provide essential investments in climate change mitigation and restoration projects, while critical water infrastructure projects would ensure safe drinking water for years, and expanding New York's wetlands program would follow a natural approach to flood protection and enhance regulations around smaller wetlands.

We commend the Governor for acknowledging the adverse impact that our historic highway system has had on communities of color. We fully support her efforts to strengthen communities by eliminating structural barriers that have divided our neighborhoods for too long. We strongly believe that investing in sustainable infrastructure that promotes cycling, walking, and outdoor recreation, especially in places that have been underserved and disproportionately impacted, will provide significant health, economic, and quality of life benefits for current and future generations.

Parks & Trails New York applauds the many proposed investments in protecting and enhancing our state's critical outdoor recreation resources and making them available, safe and welcoming for all New Yorkers. Our state park

system generates \$5 billion in economic activity for the state - a 9-to-1 return on investment. State parks create 45,000 jobs, and \$1.6 billion in annual spending comes from visitors living outside the communities in which the parks are located. Over the past two years, the value of New York's green spaces and the importance of equitable access to these spaces has been clearly illustrated. Parks and trails cannot be considered nice amenities to take or leave when budgets allow; they are essential resources.

We look forward to working with the Governor and State Legislature to advance this vision and ensure New York continues to have the nation's premier state park and trail system, economic security, and the resilience to combat climate change.

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About Parks & Trails New York:

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) is New York's leading statewide advocate for parks and trails. Since its founding in 1985, PTNY has been fighting to improve our health, economy, and quality of life through the use and enjoyment of green space. With the support of members, supporters and partners from across the state, PTNY is a prominent voice for the protection and expansion of New York's magnificent state park system and multi-use trail network, including more than 1,500 miles of greenways, bike paths, and river walks. Learn more at [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org).