



NEWS RELEASE

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PTNY Applauds full funding for 750-mile Empire State Trail in final NYS budget deal

Historic \$200 million investment will create the nation's longest multi-use trail

ALBANY – The New York State's FY18 budget deal represents a major step forward for tourism, health, and recreation with the inclusion of \$200 million in landmark funding to build the nation's longest multi-use trail, the 750-mile Empire State Trail.

The budget allocates \$77 million to the New York Power Authority to complete the remaining 20% of the 360-mile Erie Canalway Trail between Buffalo and Albany, and \$123 million to the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council to complete the remaining 40% of the Hudson River Greenway between New York City and the Southern Adirondacks. The funding will also create bicycle-friendly enhancements to the on-road Bike Route 9, connecting the Empire State Trail to the Canadian Border.

The project will connect a rich network of State and National Parks, Historic Sites, and cultural amenities, including the Erie Canal, Walkway Over the Hudson, Saratoga National Historical Park, the cities of Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, and New York, and the Adirondack and Catskill Mountains.

Once complete in 2020, the Empire State Trail will add 350 miles of new multi-use trail and on-road enhancements to the State's existing network of trails and greenways, enhancing New York's appeal as a destination for outdoor recreation and heritage tourism. The Trail will also bring new recreation and outdoor opportunities to hundreds of communities and millions of New Yorkers who live along the route, contributing substantially to local economies, public health, and the State's environment.

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) has been advocating for a network of trails throughout the state since 1985, in particular the completion of the Erie Canalway Trail, the Buffalo to Albany section of the Empire State Trail. PTNY's Close the Gaps campaign has highlighted the importance of a fully-connected trail, citing the significant economic impact that the Erie Canalway Trail already provides – an annual economic impact of \$253 million and more than 3,400 jobs supported.

“PTNY applauds Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature for recognizing the role trails and outdoor recreation play in promoting healthy communities, economic development, and tourism,” said Robin Dropkin, Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York. “The Empire State Trail makes New York the foremost trail state in the nation.”

About Parks & Trails New York

Parks & Trails New York is the leading statewide advocate for parks and trails, dedicated since 1985 to improving the health and quality of life of all New Yorkers by working with community organizations

and municipalities to envision, create, promote, and protect a growing network of parks, greenways and trails throughout the state for all to use and enjoy. For more information, visit www.ptny.org.

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