



GEORGE E. PATAKI
GOVERNOR

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12233-1010

ERIN M. CROTTY
COMMISSIONER

MAR 17 2004

RECEIVED

Honorable Neil D. Breslin
New York State Senate
Standing Committee on Finance
414 Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12247

MAR 18 2004

OFFICE OF
SENATOR NEIL D. BRESLIN

Dear Senator Breslin:

This is in response to the question you raised at the January 29, 2004 legislative hearing on the State Fiscal Year 2004-05 Executive Budget. Governor Pataki's Executive Budget provides the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (Department) with the funds necessary to maintain the State's role as a leader in the protection of our natural resources.

At the January 29th hearing, you asked about the specific number of fish and wildlife staff that is funded through the Conservation Fund. The 2004-05 Executive Budget recommends total permanent staffing for the Department's Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources of 390 positions, including 255 from the Conservation Fund.

You also asked about the Department's engineering staffing levels, and specifically how many engineers have left the Department in the last 2 years. The Department currently employs 612 engineers. Our Department's records show that in the past 2 years, in order to achieve the savings required under the 2002-03 and 2003-04 enacted budgets, 91 engineers have retired and an additional 20 have resigned. The Department has hired 19 engineers from outside the Department during that time period. The 2004-05 Executive Budget includes 70 new positions to implement the new Superfund/Brownfields program, and several additional engineer positions will be included in the staffing plan.

Lastly, you inquired about how many non-DEC employees work at the Department, how they are funded and what activities they perform. The Department has historically contracted for a number of activities, including consulting engineering services for planning, design, and construction oversight of State Superfund projects; laboratory analysis of environmental samples (water, soil and air); design and construction oversight services on projects undertaken through the term contracts managed by the New York State Office of General Services; and technical specialties in such areas as Geographic Information Systems. The Department also has a number of Memoranda of Understanding and cooperative agreements, mainly with other state agencies and not-for-profit organizations, which fund personal services. Many of these individuals are specialists in various technical fields providing on-site assistance to Department personnel in a

variety of technical areas, sciences and other areas essential to our mission. There are almost 50 Green Thumb employees, who are funded by a contract with Green Thumb Environmental Beautification. These individuals do grounds maintenance, painting at Department facilities, custodial functions and office tasks. Also, the Department has approximately 20 Americorps program employees working at our education centers and other facilities to construct and improve trails and perform other conservation and education services through a contract.

These services are funded through a variety of sources, including Special Revenue funds, federal funds and the General Fund. The amount of these services has not increased significantly in the past two years. Further, the Department typically enters into agreements which focus on services to be performed rather than the specific number of positions needed to carry-out that service. As a result, the number of contractors working with the Department can vary throughout the course of the year.

I trust that the above information addresses the questions that you raised at the January 29th hearing. If you have any questions, please contact me at (518) 402-8540.

Sincerely,



Erin M. Crotty