



CATSKILLCENTER

November 16, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

Thank you for your leadership in delivering funding for the stewardship of the Catskill Park. We look forward to your continued commitment to ensuring the conservation of the Catskill Park for future generations, while encouraging economic development and supporting our communities within the Park.

The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development is grateful to partner with New York State to implement critical Catskill Park visitor services at the **Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey Catskills Visitor Center, the Catskill Park's only, official visitor center. New York State's annual investment in the Catskills Visitor Center supports important recreation and tourism jobs for our region across the Catskill Park.** State funding covers a vital portion of costs associated with operating the visitor center including staffing, education, outreach, and maintenance, while the Catskill Center supports the remaining costs.

We respectfully **request the continued support of the Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey Catskills Visitor Center in your Executive Budget proposal at \$150,000 within the Environmental Protection Fund.** Your ongoing commitment to this funding affirms tourism opportunities, natural resource protections, public health protections, recreational access, and a better quality of life, all of which are more important than ever during this time of greatly increased use of the Park.

The Catskill Park Coalition and the Forest Preserve Coalition support funding of the Catskills Visitor Center. Both coalitions recognize the importance and value of official Park visitor centers for visitors and residents. In addition, the forthcoming **Catskills Strategic Planning Advisory Group's (CAG) final report will call for continued investment and improvement to the Catskills Visitor Center.** The CAG was established by the Commissioner of the NYSDEC, at the request of the prior Governor, to study and make recommendations about high-use impacts in the Catskill Park.

While maintaining the existing, annual funding of the Catskills Visitor Center at **\$150,000 is critical for continued operations at the present level**, it is becoming more important that State funding be increased to account for the CAG's call for increased investments at the Catskills Visitor Center and to address increasing costs overall of operations and management. Therefore, we respectfully request your consideration of **increasing your support of the Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey Catskills Visitor Center in your Executive Budget proposal to \$200,000 within the Environmental Protection Fund line.**

Thank you for your leadership on Catskill Park funding, and your understanding of the important economic, public health and natural resource benefits of environmental investments. We look forward to working with your administration to celebrate the continued stewardship of the Catskill Park.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Senterman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey Senterman
Executive Director

cc:

Kathryn Garcia, Director of State Operations
Robert Mujica, State Budget Director
Ashley Dougherty, Assistant Secretary for Environment
John O'Leary, Deputy Secretary for Energy and Environment
Caitlin Stephen, Senior Policy Advisor for Environment
Sean Ewart, Assistant Secretary for Energy
Basil Seggos, Commissioner NYSDEC