



May 27, 2008

New York State Assemblyman Steve Englebright
149 Main Street
East Setauket, NY 11733

Dear Assemblyman Englebright,

Community leaders throughout the hamlet of Kings Park have joined together to establish the Nissequogue River State Park Foundation. Our goal is simply to enhance and beautify this very special park for present and future generations.

While the foundation continues its efforts to improve the many assets that are available to our residents in this wonderful park, we need your help to protect and recognize the 365 acre expansion of the park that took place two years ago. As you know, Governor George Pataki administratively transferred the remaining acreage of the former Kings Park Psychiatric Center from the Office of Mental Health to the Office of State Parks in December 2006. It is now important for you and the new administration to commit to the park designation of this property.

Our community overwhelmingly supported the establishment of this park. It borders the fragile Long Island Sound and Nissequogue River and is adjacent to Sunken Meadow State Park. The combined acreage of both parks increases the total amount of contiguous parkland in the area to approximately 1,800 acres. The property is now home to a variety of migratory birds, reptiles, fox and deer that are seldomly seen these days across a rapidly urbanizing Long Island. The park also offers the community a tremendous opportunity to expand and create desperately needed recreational and cultural facilities for our growing population.

On May 7, 2008 State Senator Flanagan's bill (S7155) recognizing the transfer of the land to state parks and requiring that the 365 acres be used exclusively for recreational purposes passed in the State Senate. Senator Flanagan has also secured \$29 million to help clean up the abandoned buildings and other debris and refuse on the property from over 100 years of use as a state hospital.

On May 27, 2008 bill A11314, designating 365 acres of the former Kings Park Psychiatric as the Nissequogue River State Park, was introduced by State Assemblymen Fitzpatrick in the State Assembly. We were very disappointed that you chose not to co-sponsor this bill considering your strong support for maintaining this property as parkland. Your concern that this bill may be setting a precedent is unwarranted since as far back as 1885 an act of the legislature designated lands in three Catskill and eight Adirondack counties forever wild forest lands. Your sponsorship of a bill last year to create a state park through a legislative act in your own district makes your decision not to sponsor this bill even more perplexing.

The Nissequogue River State Park Foundation respectfully asks that you support and respect the wishes of the residents of Kings Park by committing to permanently protecting the property as a state park through state legislation. Creating a state park should be the responsibility of our elected representatives and should not be decided by appointed officials. It is for this reason that we are asking you to support **bill A11314**. The people of our community have waited for over 12 years for our voices to be heard and it is now time for our state officials to unite and protect this park for all New Yorkers for present and future generations. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Board members of NRSP Foundation: Michael Rosato - Chairman/President: Kings Park Civic Association, Lorna Paine - Co-Chairwoman/President: San Remo Civic Association, Charles Gardner - Co-Chairman /President: Kings Park Chamber of Commerce, Dorothy Chanin - Treasurer: Kings Park Civic Association; Victoria Brown - Secretary: Kings Park Civic Association; Sean Lehmann - Director: Kings Park Civic Association; Frank Mercuri - Director: Kings Park Civic Association; Rob Trotta - Director; Jack Hessel - Grantwriter: Kings Park Chamber of Commerce; Steve Weber - Director: Kings Park Heritage Museum, Miles Borden - Kings Park Fire Department, Tony Tanzi -Kings Park Educational Foundation; Joe Vallone - Sons of Italy; Gail Hessel - Sons of Italy; Larry Flynn - Kings Park Chamber of Commerce; Tom McCabe - Knights of Columbus; Joel Blitzer - Kings Park Soccer; Tom McCabe - Knights of Columbus; Rob Freudenberg - Nissequogue River Steering Committee.