

STATE OF NEW YORK

7753

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

May 21, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. GUNTHER -- read once and referred to the Committee on Environmental Conservation

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to establishing the position of Catskill park coordinator within the department of environmental conservation

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The New York City Watershed Agreement, the Public Access
2 Plan, the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act and other department of envi-
3 ronmental conservation programs in the Catskills all have a common
4 interest in community development, land acquisition and recreational
5 access, concern for the abundance and purity of water, and coordination
6 with other department of environmental conservation activities within
7 the watershed. The department of environmental conservation watershed
8 coordinator is responsible for the monumental task of overseeing the
9 implementation of all state partnership programs embodied in the 1997
10 New York City Watershed Agreement. The new Catskill park coordinator
11 position would complement the role of the watershed coordinator by inte-
12 grating those activities directly related to the watershed agreement
13 with all other department of environmental conservation program inter-
14 ests and by advocating for the best interests of the Catskill park. The
15 benefit of a Catskill Park Preserve Advocate has been successfully
16 demonstrated in the Hudson River estuary, Adirondacks, and Salmon River
17 corridor; a similar position will ensure integration and balance in the
18 department of environmental conservation's current and future initi-
19 atives affecting the natural, social and economic resources in the Cats-
20 kill Region.

21 § 2. The environmental conservation law is amended by adding a new
22 section 9-0115 to read as follows:

23 § 9-0115. Catskill park coordinator.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 1. The commissioner shall maintain in the department the position of
2 Catskill park coordinator to assist the commissioner in the development
3 and implementation of the public access plan for the Catskill park. The
4 Catskill park coordinator shall build partnerships between the depart-
5 ment and other state agencies, municipal governments, businesses and
6 nonprofit entities that will develop a community-based tourism strategy
7 for the forest preserve to help fortify the regional economy by schedul-
8 ing and organizing forums and following up on future recommendations,
9 actions, or concerns raised at such forums.

10 2. Duties of the Catskill park coordinator shall include, but not be
11 limited to, the following:

12 a. coordinating implementation of the public access plan and other
13 approved or adopted Catskill park-wide plans with all public and private
14 stakeholders;

15 b. enhancing the ability of the department to respond to the needs of
16 the public on a timely basis;

17 c. coordinating complex management issues and facilitating improved
18 communication between programs within regions three and four of the
19 department and between those regions and the central offices of the
20 department;

21 d. seeking funding for and tracking implementation of the public
22 access plan, unit management plans, and other approved and adopted Cats-
23 kill park-wide plans;

24 e. providing continuity with future planning within the department and
25 other state agencies, including, but not limited to, the Catskill asso-
26 ciation for tourism services;

27 f. maintaining a tracking system for department program activities,
28 including facility development and resource management plan preparation
29 and implementation for the Catskill region; and

30 g. providing for improved communications between the department and
31 the public and building constituency support for departmental initi-
32 atives that benefit the Catskill region.

33 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.