



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STATEMENT FROM PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK ON  
GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL'S 2023 STATE OF THE STATE  
ADDRESS**

(ALBANY, NY) - At today's State of the State address, Governor Hochul charted a path for continuing the great investments in recent years that New York State has made in our parks, public lands, and environmental stewardship over the past decade.

While the Governor did not include specific strategies that support and expand open space and greenways, we are excited by the many initiatives she proposed to continue critical environmental conservation work, including:

- Directing the Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to power their facilities with renewable energy sources by 2030
- Investing an additional \$500 million in critical clean water infrastructure to improve water quality and protect public health
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and combating climate change through a Cap-and-Invest program
- Establishing a new program to remediate so called "forever chemicals," such as PFAS, from our communities in an effort to protect our environment and drinking water

These important priorities will create synergy with the historic \$4 billion Environmental Bond Act approved by voters in November. Together, the proposed initiatives included in the State of the State and implementation of the Bond Act will put New York on track to not only be a national leader in environmental stewardship and climate action, but continue to foster more livable, healthy, and economically vibrant communities in every corner of the Empire State.

Parks & Trails New York applauds the focus being placed on social and environmental justice throughout the Governor's proposed initiatives. As we look forward to the Centennial Celebration of our state park system in 2024, we recognize the value and importance of

ensuring all stories in our cultural history are acknowledged and that making our public lands resilient, accommodating and welcoming requires not only investment, but fostering opportunities that strengthen local communities. Over the past three years, the value of New York's public lands and the importance of equitable access to the natural environment and outdoor recreational opportunities has been clearly illustrated. Our state park system generates \$5 billion in economic activity for the state - a 9-to-1 return on investment. State parks create 45,000 jobs, and \$1.6 billion in annual spending comes from visitors living outside the communities in which the parks are located. Effective stewardship of our precious natural places is vital for the wellbeing of all New Yorkers; now, and in generations to come.

We look forward to working with the Governor and State Legislature to advance this vision and ensure New York continues to have the nation's premier state park and trail system, economic security, and the resilience to combat climate change.

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#### **About Parks & Trails New York:**

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) is New York's leading statewide advocate for parks and trails. Since its founding in 1985, PTNY has been fighting to improve our health, economy, and quality of life through the use and enjoyment of green space. With the support of members, supporters and partners from across the state, PTNY is a prominent voice for the protection and expansion of New York's magnificent state park system and multi-use trail network, including more than 1,500 miles of greenways, bike paths, and river walks. Learn more at [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org).

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