



# NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **COUNTY EXECUTIVE TAKES LEADERSHIP ROLE IN FIGHTING FOR THE TAXPAYERS OF ULSTER COUNTY**

Kingston, NY (February 2, 2009) - In response to provisions in Governor Paterson's state budget proposal that freezes the amount of property and school tax payments the State would make to local governments and school districts, County Executive, Mike Hein has taken a leadership role in drawing attention to and opposing this measure.

Hein said that, "I will be a tireless advocate for the people of Ulster County and though I applaud the Governor's bold actions in *other* areas to address an unprecedented state budget deficit, this proposal would place an unacceptable burden on the taxpayers of Ulster County - and indeed on taxpayers throughout the state. It creates a triple negative impact by affecting our County, Towns and School Districts and would come at a time when taxpayers can least afford it." Hein added that the environmental community has also expressed concern because conservation of open space, through the State land acquisition program, would be threatened by an increase in local opposition resulting from the loss in tax revenues.

Hein has already written a letter to Governor Paterson, and Ulster County's state representatives, strongly opposing the proposal. He is scheduled to meet with the Governor's office to drive home the message personally. Through the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), Hein also Co-Chairs the *County Coalition for Property Tax Payment Equity*. The County Executive has directed his staff to prepare information outlining the issue for all of Ulster County's state representatives, so they will be

armed with information to oppose the Governor's measure - and persuade their colleagues to do the same. Hein will also be asking the Ulster County Legislature to pass a resolution requesting that the Governor withdraw his proposal or the State Legislature to reject it.

Hein said that, "We have made Governor Paterson aware of our concerns, and of our opposition to this plan. We have also made all of the County's representatives to the State Legislature aware of this unacceptable situation. We are confident that like us, they do not want to see the adoption of this particular measure and the ill effects it will undoubtedly have on Ulster County taxpayers."

The State owns approximately 359,000 acres in the four counties in the Catskill Region: Ulster, Greene, Delaware, and Sullivan. Among these counties, Ulster has the largest number of acres of State owned lands – approximately 185,000. The State currently pays over \$13 million in property and school taxes for its lands in the Catskill Region - \$7.8 million in Ulster County alone. The results of a freeze on the amount of tax paid by the State would be most dramatic in Towns like Shandaken, Denning and Hardenburgh, where the State owns close to 124,000 acres that cannot be developed and that will, under the current proposal, no longer pay a fair share of property taxes, moving that burden to local taxpayers.

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