



NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE ANNOUNCES SUCCESS IN STOPPING STATE LANDS COST SHIFT

Kingston, NY – March 30, 2009 – County Executive Mike Hein is pleased to announce that Governor Paterson’s initial budget proposal that would freeze property tax payments, by the State, on State owned land has been eliminated.

Hein has been at the forefront of a statewide effort to persuade Governor Paterson and legislative leaders that the proposal was bad public policy and one which would unfairly shift the State’s tax obligations to already overburdened school and property tax payers. Hein met with Governor Paterson and contacted key legislative leaders to encourage them to withdraw the provision. Through the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), Hein, who Co-Chairs the *County Coalition for Property Tax Payment Equity*, led the committee’s successful effort which turned back the cost shift on state lands.

Hein said, “It is important for all levels of government to recognize that we serve the same taxpayer. The issue of freezing tax payments on State owned land would have negatively impacted school districts and communities throughout New York and particularly here in Ulster County where the State owns significant acreage. Where the State has a legitimate obligation to pay its fair share of taxes, it must.” He added, “This type of cost shift is exactly what must be avoided now - and in the future. We are in the process of examining the State budget to identify other potential cost shifts and to do everything we can to see that they are eliminated.” Hein went on to say, “I would like to thank

Assemblyman Cahill, legislative leaders and my colleagues at NYSAC for their leadership and perseverance in opposing this measure. I would also like to recognize Governor Paterson for having taken the time to listen to, and act on, our concerns.”

New York owns approximately 124 thousand acres in Ulster County and currently pays about \$7.8 million in property taxes to school districts, municipalities and the County. The proposed freeze would have redistributed the State’s obligations to taxpayers in all of these jurisdictions. By freezing property tax payments to local communities, the provision would have also discouraged further initiatives to preserve forests and other wildlife areas for future generations.

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