



New York State's Clean Water Future

A Game-Changer for Western New York Waterways

Over the last 72 hours New York State has taken monumental steps towards providing an unprecedented level of water quality protections and improvements for Western New York waterways. New York State is demonstrating a deep and long-lasting commitment to clean water, quality of life and natural resources across the state. Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature are together demonstrating national leadership by comprehensively and strategically investing in water infrastructure, pollution clean-up, source water protection, public access, natural habitat, drinking water, water-based economic development and eco-tourism.

Governor Cuomo and the New York Legislature have committed \$2.5 Billion in a multi-year, Clean Water Infrastructure Act that will provide much-needed funding and attention to our state's aging water infrastructure, including sewer and septic systems and green stormwater management. This Act will also support critical monitoring of drinking water, "source-water" protections through land acquisition, and a remedial program to address historical and ongoing water pollution challenges.

One of Governor Cuomo's project proposals under the Buffalo Billion II program is the implementation of Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper's vision of the *Buffalo Blueway* initiative. The Blueway system will expand and enhance waterfront access for all communities and will be strategically connected to existing sites and attractions. The project will brand Buffalo as a waterfront city, and add wayfinding and unique interpretation to guide and attract visitors. The project will also work to improve water quality, remove physical barriers, enhance the natural environment and improve safety. The Blueway will be promoted through a coordinated marketing program, including a Blueway guide and smartphone app. The proposed \$10 Million effort will reshape and rebrand Buffalo's waterfront for generations to come.

For the last three years, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper has been calling for a dedicated source of funding for local waterways through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). The EPF has been re-authorized at \$300 Million for the next fiscal year, and this year, through a coordinated effort between Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and our local elected officials, Scajaquada Creek will see a dedicated \$1 million capital investment. The momentum continues to build for the restoration of this historic creek system.

Western New York is a Great Lakes coastal region whose fresh water resources create the lifeblood of our community, our economy, and public health. Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature have taken significant steps towards New York State's clean water future, and Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper applauds these decisions and commitments.

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper will continue our efforts in Albany, and coordinating with numerous partners to help secure and direct water quality funds into Western New York for projects benefitting Scajaquada Creek, the Niagara River watershed, and our Great Lakes ecosystem.