



Preservation League of NYS

Response to Governor Cuomo's 30-Day Budget Amendment Canal System Revitalization Act Proposal

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The Preservation League of New York State is New York State's statewide historic preservation nonprofit. We lead advocacy, economic development and education programs across the state. We believe that the power of our New York State Canal System, a National Historic Landmark, is rooted in its history, authenticity as a continuously operating end-to-end canal system, vibrancy, and ability to leverage tourism now and in the future.

Upon reading Governor Cuomo's "[Canal System Revitalization Act](#)" proposed in a 30-day budget amendment, we believe that actions taken with respect to our National Historic Landmark treasure should be done with transparency and thorough, meaningful public engagement.

While the Preservation League encourages and supports meaningful investment in our National Historic Landmark NYS Canal System, we have concerns with the bill's stated Legislative findings and statement of purposes, as well as the actions and goals that follow.

In 1992, the NYS Legislature created the [Canal Recreationway Commission](#). According to the NYS Canal Corporation:

In addition to maintaining and periodically revising the Canal Recreationway Plan, the primary responsibility of the Commission is to make recommendations concerning the future of the Canal System. Embodied in the Commission's vision are three fundamental goals:

- *Preserving the best of the past.*
- *Enhancing recreational opportunities.*
- *Fostering appropriate and sustainable economic development.*

Given the overlap between the Canal Recreationway Commission's purpose and goals and those stated in Governor Cuomo's proposed *Canal System Revitalization Act*, we ask what purpose it serves to dissolve a commission that has not had an opportunity to meet since 2017, in order to create a separate and largely Governor-controlled entity?

The *Canal System Revitalization Act* proposed substantive changes to our National Historic Landmark NYS Canal System including removal of important preservation considerations, and therefore deserves opportunity for open presentation and discussion outside of the 30-day budget amendment process.

The Preservation League strongly urges the NYS Legislature to strike New Part VV from the Transportation, Economic Development and Environmental Conservation (TED) Bill and ask Governor Cuomo to engage in an open and transparent conversation about the purpose and goals of dissolving the Canal Recreationway Commission and establishing significant funding authority to a new and duplicative New York State Canal System Revitalization Trust.