



United to Preserve Catskill Park Communities & Environment

Community Protests Spitzer's Belleayre Resort "Deal" Judith Enck accepts "Spirit of the Catskills" award for Gov Spitzer, During SEQRA Review

Enck accepted petition to Spitzer; Enck to meet with community members

(Highmount, NY – January 27, 2008) Some 70 Catskill Park community representatives from villages and hamlets all over the region braved 15 degree weather to protest the Belleayre Resort proposed by Crossroads Ventures, and the fatally-flawed "Agreement in Principle" signed by DEP and brokered behind closed-doors by Governor Spitzer and Deputy Secretary for the Environment Judith Enck.

Protestors were in high spirits despite the cold, noise and constant blowing snow from the Ski Center's roaring diesel-powered artificial snow guns. They were also expressing outrage that Judith Enck came to the public Belleayre Mountain Ski Center to accept the "Spirit of the Catskills" award for Governor Spitzer from boosters and investors of the proposed private for-profit real estate development.

Belleayre Resort at Catskill Park's two developments, Wildacres Spa and Highmount Spa, the largest ever proposed for the Catskill Park region, are currently under SEQRA Review, with the NY Department of Environmental Conservation, host to the occasion, the Snowball fundraiser, as lead agency.

"It's just inappropriate for them to accept this award," said Julie McQuain of Save the Mountain. "Whether it's the governor himself or Ms. Enck, who personally facilitated this proposed "deal," it's a slap at the public during SEQRA review." When presenting the petition to Enck, McQuain asked "What's the point of public participation in a review if the important decisions are already made?"

In consideration for their neighbors attending the annual Snowball, a fundraiser for the Belleayre Music Festival, protestors were friendly and let the ubiquitous red *Save the Mountain* and numerous creative handmade signs do the shouting:

- Don't *SPIT Sir* on Our Mountain;
- Closed Doors + Gag Order = Bad Deal;
- No Developer Welfare;
- \$pirit of the Cat\$kill\$;
- Land Left INTACT--No Carbon IMPACT!;
- Forever Wild—NOT Defiled.

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“Thank you for voicing your opinions,” Enck replied, as she stopped to read signs and accept the petition. “If you want a meeting with me we can make arrangements.”

“We are very concerned about the negative social and economic impacts that a corporate-owned resort of this magnitude would bring about,” said Judith Wyman of Friends of Catskill Park. “In addition to the negative impacts on the environment, there would be costs to local economies and taxpayers.”

“Destination resorts are geared to contain their clientele and compete head-on with local businesses,” Wyman said. “And historically taxes go up, not down, to pay for increased services needed. So the communities pay twice, first in loss of quality of life and second in higher taxes”

“Why should the taxpayer-funded Belleayre Ski Center expansion and snowmaking favor one private developer’s timeshare sales?” asked John Carney, of HART: the Hardenburgh Assn of Residents and Taxpayers.

“Investing more in snowmaking for Ski resorts is a dubious use of taxpayer assets,” said Scott Gould, also of HART. “The Union of Concerned Scientists’ Northeast Climate Change Report warns of warmer winters and less snow,” he added.

Other issues raised by participants included: more flooding, excessive traffic on winding country roads, light pollution of the famously dark, starry night sky, clear cutting trees for a golf course, and high elevation commercial construction spoiling famous Catskill mountain views.

Ulster County Legislator Don Gregorious of Woodstock stood with his constituents throughout the cold but animated gathering. Rep. Maurice Hinchey stopped to express his support for their message, chatting with protestors and reading signs on his way in to the party.

Underscoring the broad-based concern about the massive development proposed for the Catskill Park and the character of their rural mountain communities, protestors came from nearby villages and hamlets of Highmount, Fleischmanns, Pine Hill, Halcott Center, Hardenburgh, Arkville, Margaretville, Mt. Tremper, Phoenicia, Woodstock, Andes, Saugerties, Delhi, Otego and even NYC and Long Island.

Background on the proposed Belleayre Resort development, the petition to Governor Eliot Spitzer, full text and exhibits of the “Agreement in Principle,” news articles, photos and illustrations are available at www.SavetheMountain.net

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