

Adirondack Council
Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks
Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Environmental Advocates of New York
Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks
Sierra Club – Atlantic Chapter

February 26, 2007

Honorable Eliot Spitzer
The Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Spitzer:

We, the undersigned organizations, who care deeply about the environment, communities and economy of the Adirondack Park, encourage you to work cooperatively to solve the need for cellular communications along the Adirondack Northway (I-87) as it runs through the Adirondack Park. We believe that the best solution is for the State to finance the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) approved project which has been dormant for a number of years.

The Northway was designated a federal scenic highway at its completion in 1967. Its scenic qualities are so important to overall state policies for the Adirondack region that the state acquired scenic easements at every interchange of the Adirondack Northway beginning in 1965.

While much has been said about real or perceived obstacles for improving communications along the road corridor, little has been done since the APA approved the original New York State Department of Transportation, New York State Police, Crown Communications New York, Inc. permit in December 2002 (P2002-269).

Now that circumstances have brought the situation to the forefront once again, we believe that it is time for the State to ensure that adequate cell service is available, while still protecting the natural resources of the Adirondack Park. This can be done by providing either financial incentives to companies to complete the approved project, or by the State building the project itself and enticing companies to locate their equipment on the towers.

This effort can be accomplished without suspending important environmental regulations or changing State law. If the lack of cell coverage is truly about the financial burden companies would face in locating their equipment along the Northway, then the State can easily remedy this during the upcoming budget negotiations. If money were set aside to help fund the already approved project in the State budget currently being negotiated, construction could begin later this spring and be completed by the fall.

The approved project is the best option because it provides seamless and redundant coverage along the road corridor without violating any of the Adirondack Park Agency's rules or regulations. We believe it is worthwhile investment of the State's resources to enhance cellular communications along the Northway while still protecting the beauty of the Adirondack Park, the basis of our tourism economy.

At your convenience, we would be happy to meet with you or your staff to discuss implementing the already approved project or other viable alternatives.

Sincerely,

Brian L. Houseal, Executive Director, Adirondack Council
David H. Gibson, Executive Director, Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks
William Cooke, Director of Government Relations, Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Robert Moore, Executive Director, Environmental Advocates of New York
Peter Bauer, Executive Director, Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks
John Stouffer, Legislative Director, Sierra Club – Atlantic Chapter