

HI EVERYONE. NEEDLESS TO SAY, I'M DELIGHTED TO BE HERE. I WANT TO THANK BOB KAFIN FOR THAT WARM WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION AND LET YOU ALL KNOW THAT I'M NOT NEARLY AS OLD AS HE MADE ME SOUND. AND I WANT TO THANK THE ADIRONDACK COUNCIL BOARD, WILLIE JANEWAY AND HIS TERRIFIC STAFF AND EVERYONE, PAST AND PRESENT, WHOSE LOVE FOR THE ADIRONDACKS HAS MADE IT THE AMAZING, UNIQUE AND EXTRAORDINARY PLACE THAT IT IS.

HERE WITH ME TODAY IS MY WIFE of NEARLY 34 YEARS KATHLEEN, WHO GREW UP IN FLUSHING IN THE SHADOW OF WHAT WAS THEN SHEA STADIUM, AND WHO HAS GROWN TO LOVE THE ADIRONDACKS ALMOST AS MUCH AS ME. AND MY DAUGHTER MARCELLE, WHO HAPPENS TO BE A NATIVE ADIRONDACKER. SHE WAS BORN IN SARANAC LAKE HOSPITAL OVERLOOKING LAKE COLBY, AND WE NAMED HER AFTER MY MOTHER AND MT. MARCY. ABSENT IS MY SON LIAM, WHO IS LIVING THE DREAM, RESIDING AND WORKING IN LAKE PLACID THIS SUMMER, AND MY DAUGHTER JULIA, WHO IS IN SCHOOL AT THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA, STUDYING TO BE A PHYSICAL THERAPY DOC AND WISHING EVERY SWELTERING DAY THERE THAT SHE WAS HERE IN THE ADIRONDACKS.

IT'S A GREAT HONOR TO BE RECOGNIZED AS "CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR". BUT FRANKLY, ALL I HAVE ACCOMPLISHED OVER THE COURSE OF MY CAREER I OWE TO OTHERS. SO I AGREED TO ACCEPT THIS AWARD ON THEIR BEHALF. I'VE BEEN BLESSED WITH GREAT MENTORS, ROLE MODELS AND ACCOMPLISHED STAFF IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS. AND WHILE THERE ARE TOO MANY TO LIST, GIVEN MY AGE AND THE DURATION OF MY WORK IN THE

ENVIRONMENTAL ARENA, I'D LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE A FEW. WELL, MORE LIKE A DOZEN. ARMANDO PERSICO (AKA DICK PERSICO) AND TOM ULASEWICZ INTRODUCED ME TO THE PARK, THE AGENCY ACT AND THE STATE LAND MASTER PLAN. TOM INTRODUCED ME TO THE APA BOARD, INCLUDING LEGENDS LIKE PETER PAYNE, LIZ THORNDIKE, ARTHUR SAVAGE, JOHN STOCK AND MANY OTHERS. ARMANDO PERSICO, FOR YOU TRIVIA BUFFS, WAS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL AUTHORS OF THE APA ACT AND WHEN HE FINISHED DRAFTING IT, HE WAS ASKED WHAT THE EFFECTIVE DATE SHOULD BE TO GIVE ENOUGH TIME TO GEAR UP FOR IMPLEMENTATION. HE SUGGESTED AUGUST 1ST, HIS BIRTHDAY, AND THAT'S THE DAY IN 1973 THAT THE LAW WENT INTO EFFECT.

GARY RANDORF GAVE ME A TRUE APPRECIATION FOR THE PARK'S INTRINSIC BEAUTY AND WHY IT NEEDED SPECIAL PROTECTION. THERE ARE A HOST OF APA STAFF THAT DEEPENED MY LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PARK, FROM BILL CURRAN TO RAY CURRAN TO DAN SPADA. AT DEC IN THE 90'S IT WAS TOM JORLING AND LANG MARSH. AND IT WAS MARIO CUOMO THAT TAUGHT ME THAT SOME ISSUES, LIKE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SHOULD TRANSCEND POLITICS. HE ALSO TAUGHT ME HOW UTTERLY BRUISING THE GAME OF BASKETBALL COULD BE, BUT THAT IS ANOTHER STORY.

AND THEN THERE IS KIM ELLIMAN, MY LONG-TIME FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE AT OSI. KIM BROUGHT ME ON AFTER MARIO LOST THE ELECTION IN 2004 AND HE AND THE OSI BOARD GAVE ME INCREDIBLE LEEWAY TO BUY AND PROTECT LOTS OF SPECTACULAR PLACES, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH WAS THE 10,000-ACRE TAWAHUS TRACT TO OUR NORTH. AND AFTER 15 YEARS OF DOING MY BEST TO BREAK THE BANK AND SADDLE OSI WITH MORE THAN A FEW WHITE ELEPHANTS,

KIM LET ME LEAVE TO TRY MY HAND AT RUNNING DEC. THAT GAVE HIM TIME TO REBUILD OSI. AND HE'S DONE SO IN SPECTACULAR FASHION, GROWING ITS ASSETS, HUMAN AND FINANCIAL, AND PROTECTING GREAT LANDSCAPES FROM THE CANADA TO GEORGIA. THANKFULLY, THE ADIRONDACKS ARE HIS FIRST LOVE. WITH KIM TODAY IS MY FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE AT OSI, ERIK KULLESEID, WHO DOES AN ABSOLUTELY AMAZING JOB SUPPORTING NY'S PARK SYSTEM, MAKING IT THE ENVY IN THE NATION.

AT DEC, ONCE AGAIN, I HAD A STELLAR TEAM TO WORK WITH: MARC GERSTMAN, MY EXECUTIVE DEPUTY AND RIGHT HAND MAN WHO ALSO WORKED IN TWO COUMO ADMINISTRATIONS. HE'S HERE TODAY AND I PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE SURVIVED AT DEC IF HE DIDN'T COVER MY BACK FOR MY FOUR AND HALF YEARS. NO ONE CARES MORE ABOUT THE PARK AND ITS COMMUNITIES THAN MARC. ED MCTIERNAN, A MY GRADUATE SCHOOL FRIEND WHO I RECRUITED FROM A LARGE NEW JERSEY LAW FIRM TO BE MY GENERAL COUNSEL BECAUSE I WANTED A FRESH PERSPECTIVE AND SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTOOD THE REGULATED COMMUNITY AND HOW I COULD MORE EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH THEM.

I HAD AN AMAZING EXECUTIVE TEAM, GREAT REGIONAL LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING WILLIE, UNTIL HE DEFECTED AND TRADED UP, AND AN AGENCY FULL OF STAFF WHOSE LOVE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC WAS AND IS SECOND TO NONE. KATHY MOSER, ROB DAVIES, FRAN SHEEHAN, KAREN RICHARDS, PETER FRANK, JULIE TIGHE, BOB STEGEMAN, TOM MARTIN, CAROL COTTROFELD (WHO IS HERE TODAY AND WHO'S ACCESS WORK FOR THE DISABLED I ADMIRE AND TOTALLY EMBRACED), ADAM STEWART, WHO WE

HIRED TO HELP DEC ENGAGE WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY. THEN THERE ARE THE ECO'S AND THE RANGERS, I WISH I COULD NAME THEM ALL INDIVIDUALLY, BECAUSE THEY ARE VERY SPECIAL PEOPLE WHO DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A PUBLIC SERVANT. AND OF COURSE, MY BOSS, ANDREW CUOMO, WHO INHERITED HIS LOVE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE ADIRONDACKS FROM HIS FATHER. AND WHAT A RUN WE HAD.

WE REFORMED THE STATE'S BROWNFIELD PROGRAM; WE SECURED A BILLION DOLLAR, TEN YEAR REAUTHORIZATION OF STATE SUPERFUND; WE DRAMATICALLY LOWERED THE CO2 EMISSION CAP UNDER THE REGIONAL GREENHOUSE GAS INITIATIVE; WE SYSTEMATICALLY INCREASED THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND; IN THE AFTERMATH OF SEVERAL EPIC FLOODS, ONE TROPICAL STORM AND TWO HURRICANES, WE CHANGED THE WAY THE STATE RESPONDED TO EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS AND HOW AND WHERE IT REBUILT IN COASTAL AREAS; IN THE WAKE OF THE LAC MEGANTIC DISASTER, WE SPEARHEADED A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RAIL TRANSPORT OF OIL THROUGHOUT THE STATE; WE MADE A MAJOR COMMITMENT TO REPAIRING ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE LIKE FLOOD CONTROL STRUCTURES, WASTE WATER TREATMENT FACILITIES, LEAKING GAS WELLS AND THE STATE'S FISH HATCHERIES. WE MADE A MAJOR, RECURRING INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS. AND AGAINST THE TIDE OF EVERY OTHER NATURAL GAS PRODUCING STATE IN THE COUNTRY, WE BANNED FRACKING.

BUT I'M MOST PROUD OF WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED HERE IN THE ADIRONDACKS. AND WHEN I SAY WE, I MEAN THE COLLECTIVE WE – DEC, APA,

THE COUNCIL, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, THE COLLEGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND FORESTRY AND A HOST OF OTHERS. WE COMPLETED THE ACQUISITION OF THE FINCH PROPERTY, ALL 69,000 ACRES (AND BY THE WAY, WE ALL OWE A HUGE DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO TNC – WHO PUT \$120 MILLION ON THE TABLE IN ONE OF THE MOST COMPLEX TRANSACTIONS IN CONSERVATION HISTORY AND PUT ITS FAITH, SOME WOULD SAY BLIND FAITH, IN THE STATE COMING UP WITH A PILE OF ACQUISITION MONEY. AND, THEN, WHEN THE STATE FINALLY CAME THROUGH, IT PUT \$1.25 MILLION INTO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FOR THE FIVE TOWNS THAT WERE IMPACTED BY THE DEAL).

WE PASSED TWO CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS: NYCO AND TOWNSHIP 40; THE FIRST ADDRESSING A DECADES OLD ISSUE, THE OTHER A CENTURY OLD ISSUE. I APPLAUD THE COUNCIL FOR ITS LEADERSHIP ON BOTH THESE AMENDMENTS AND KNOW THAT NYCO WAS NOT AN EASY DECISION. BUT THAT'S WHAT LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT.

WE COMPLETED A NOVEL APPROACH TO UNIT MANAGEMENT PLANNING IN THE GREAT SOUTH WOODS AND THANKS TO JACK DRURY, JOE DADEY AND MANY OTHERS, WE DEVELOPED A PROMISING CONCEPTUAL PLAN FOR A HUT-TO-HUT SYSTEM IN THE UPPER HUDSON REGION. ESSEX COUNTY CHAIR BILL FARBER WAS THE INSPIRATION AND THE GLUE THAT KEPT THESE EFFORTS ON TRACK ALONG WITH GEORGE CANON, CLARK SEAMAN, STEVE MCNALLY, RON MOORE AND BRIAN WELLS.

THIS IS PRETTY GOOD STUFF AND THE COUNCIL SHOULD BE VERY PROUD OF ITS ROLE IN MAKING IT ALL HAPPEN. BUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE PARK IS FRAGILE. AND LOOKING AHEAD, THE COUNCIL HAS AN ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY TO BOTH THE FOREST PRESERVE AND THE COMMUNITIES THAT ARE STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE.

I FOR ONE AM GOING TO CONTINUE TO COUNT ON THE COUNCIL TO BE THE THOUGHTFUL VOICE OF REASON IN THE PARK. I'M GOING TO COUNT ON THE COUNCIL TO BE A PARTNER TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WHO HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO THRIVE IF THE CONSERVATION STORY HERE IS TO SUCCEED IN THE LONG RUN. I'M GOING TO COUNT ON THE COUNCIL TO PROMOTE CLEAN ENERGY IN THE PARK SO THAT IT CAN BE ON THE FOREFRONT OF CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE, THE NUMBER ONE THREAT NOT ONLY TO THE PARK BUT TO THE PLANET. AND I'M GOING TO COUNT ON THE COUNCIL TO STAND APART FROM OTHERS AND CONTINUE TO ENGAGE IN TRUSTWORTHY, HONEST AND CANDID COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC, ESPECIALLY LOCAL OFFICIALS.

THANKS AGAIN FOR THIS AWARD AND FOR ALL THE EXTRAORDINARY WORK YOU DO ON BEHALF OF THIS MAGNIFICENT PLACE.