

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representatives Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) and John M. McHugh (R-Pierrepont Manor) announced today that they, along with fourteen cosigners, have submitted a letter to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies to ensure that funding is maintained for three programs critical to the United States' fight against acid rain.

Arcuri and McHugh are requesting that the Clean Air Status and Trends Network (CASTNET), Temporary Integrated Monitoring of Ecosystems (TIME), and Long-Term Monitoring (LTM) programs continue to receive their historic levels of funding of \$3.9 million for CASTNET and \$800,000 combined for TIME/LTM.

"In Upstate New York we are blessed with the most beautiful lakes, woods and meadows in the country," **Arcuri said**. "We are stewards of our natural surroundings and funding for these critical acid rain programs is vital to make sure our pristine wilderness is protected, not only for our use, but for our children and grandchildren. Protecting our natural beauty is not only about personal enjoyment - from the Adirondacks to the Finger Lakes our environment is a critical part of our economy. Hunters and anglers, boaters and hikers, come from around the county and bring economic growth to rural communities."

"Understandably, our environmental focus in Congress is on the 'hot topics' like climate change, clean energy, and 'going green.' However, we cannot lose focus on an issue that, unfortunately, continues to have a severe and detrimental impact on large parts of the United States, particularly in New York: acid rain," **said McHugh**. "We need to continue to take action to understand and fight this problem. These three programs do just that. I am committed to working with my colleagues in Congress to ensure that CASTNET, TIME, and LTM are maintained and funded at their historic level."

Acid rain, which is principally caused by nitrogen oxides (NOx) and sulfur dioxide (SO2), destroys forests, kills fish, and poisons water. Furthermore, scientific studies have identified a relationship between the elevated levels of the fine particles that cause acid rain and increased illness and premature death from heart and lung disorders, such as asthma and bronchitis.

Established in 1987, CASTNET is the nation's primary source for atmospheric data on dry acidic deposition, rural ground-level ozone and other forms of atmospheric pollution that enter

the environment as particles and gases, such as mercury. Currently, the CASTNET program is at 86 sites in over 40 states, including three sites in New York. Although CASTNET has been funded at \$3.9 million throughout the past decade, the program has experienced a decrease of \$1.2 million after being indexed for inflation. The EPA has deemed CASTNET critical to maintaining accountability of the Acid Rain Program, the Clean Air Interstate Rule, and other programs for controlling transported air pollutants.

TIME and LTM are the only extensive networks in the Eastern United States that evaluate the status and potential recovery of sensitive ecosystems, which are particularly vulnerable to further damage from acid rain. However, the Administration's current Fiscal Year 2009 budget proposes to eliminate these critical programs, which were fully funded in last year's budget. TIME and LTM support programs in both the Adirondack and Catskill Parks.

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