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Honorable Daniel Maffei
Member, U.S. Congress
P.O. Box 7306
1340 Federal Bldg.
Syracuse, NY 13261-7306

Dear Congressman Maffei:

I write to support your efforts to work with colleagues in the New York State Congressional delegation to secure the requested \$1 million federal appropriation for the US Department of Agriculture-APHIS Wildlife Services cormorant management program headquartered in Brewerton, NY. This program must be revived for FY 2011 in order to continue its proven success as a stimulant of jobs and revenue. If the program is not restored, one of New York's most important natural resources will be harmed and the regional economy will face substantial job and revenue losses.

The program was created in partnership with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to address invasive cormorants' harmful effects on the fish population of New York. This is one of the most serious invasive species matters facing New York State. Federal research indicates that local economies lost up to \$500 million and 12,000 jobs because fish-eating cormorants did so much damage to the fishery.

From 2004 until 2009, the federal government has provided funds to USDA to enact programs that chase cormorants away from nesting areas, destroy nests, and take other measures to limit cormorant-related harm. Last year was the first time since the program's launch that no cormorants were reported nesting on Oneida Lake. However, fish populations were so severely depleted by 15 years of unchecked predation that they cannot sustain a large-scale return of cormorants, such as would occur if cormorant management is not restored.

Federal researchers estimate that, since 2004, the federally funded USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services cormorant management program has protected as many as 1,400 jobs and as much as \$50 million in related revenue in the four-county region surrounding Oneida Lake. As Congress considers measures to protect jobs and stimulate the economy, it should support this low-cost measure that creates a 50:1 return on the investment of federal dollars.

While other states such as Arkansas and Virginia will enter FY 2010 with federal support for their USDA programs, New York's Congressional delegation must work to restore the program for 2011 and beyond. I will be working with state officials to hopefully maintain some smaller-scale programs to fill the gap in the short term, but it is essential to restore the requested federal support for this program to have a sustainable future. Federal support was critical in the past and it will be needed to keep the program's job creation and revenue generation benefits going.

As always, I appreciate your time and attention to this request and if you have any questions please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,



David J. Valesky
NY State Senator

DJV/sb

NEW YORK
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ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247



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