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**THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF THE ADIRONDACKS**

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February 23, 2005

J.A. Brillings, Secretary
NYS Public Service Commission
3 Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12223-1350

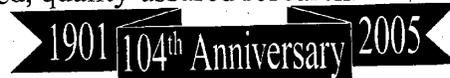
Re. CASE 05-M-0090, System Benefits Charge

Dear Secretary Brillings:

The Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks is a non-profit, membership organization incorporated in New York State since 1901. In relation to the acidification of Adirondack lakes and streams, we have been an interested party since the 1970s under the leadership of the late Arthur M. Crocker. In those early years, Mr. Crocker established close ties between advocacy and educational organizations like our Association and acid rain research at the aquatic level (for example Dr. Carl Schofield, Cornell University) and forest-watershed level (for example Dr. Gene Likens, Institute of Ecosystem Studies, Millbrook),

More recently, the Association has been an enthusiastic observer of the Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Protection (EMAP) Program funded by the System Benefits Charge (SBC) under the administration of NYSERDA. In particular, we have been keenly interested in the work of the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation to collect and analyze spatial and temporal data on representative Adirondack lakes and streams. This work has proven critical to a growing understanding of how lake and stream environments in this extremely sensitive ecoregion of the State respond to changes in acid inputs deriving from sulfur and nitrogen compounds.

Without the monthly sampling program on 52 representative Adirondack lakes – the longest, uninterrupted record of lake chemistry in the region's history – the public would not have the benefit of understanding the changes that have taken place since implementation of the Acid Rain provisions of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. The fact is that the Clean Air Act Amendments have resulted in a significant decline in sulfates inputs to lakes in the Adirondacks, but a less consistent and less significant decline in nitrates. The results of 22 years of such data indicate that recovery from acidification is very slow and complicated by many factors. Without the long-term monitoring funded by energy consumers in New York, the public's demonstrated and passionate interest in acid rain and its impacts would not be informed by such interrupted, quality-assured research.



A quietly effective conservation organization for over a century.

Thank you for considering the Association in your Estate Planning

Such research also directly benefits public policy makers in Albany, such as Governor Pataki and his agency leaders who have proven to be leaders in the fight to reduce the impacts of acidification on sensitive receptor areas such as the Adirondacks. It is also important for the US Congress in Washington which must undertake the required Clean Air Act reauthorization. Draft legislation now under consideration in Congress suggests that further improvements in the national Acid Rain program might not go into full implementation until the year 2015 or beyond.

Therefore, the Association strongly supports the extension of the SBC to the period of 2015-2020 to assure this Adirondack lake and stream research continues uninterrupted in anticipation of results from changes in the Clean Air Act.

We are also strong supporters of ongoing research on mercury, fine particulates, ozone and other pollutants funded by the SBC. Many of these pollutants, such as sulfur dioxide and ozone, act synergistically in the Adirondack Park. It is critical that this research continue and be well integrated under the administration of NYSERDA.

Long-term ecological monitoring is among the most difficult work to fund, but among the most important to undertake if we are to understand the complex interactions between natural and human-induced environments. The SBC is an efficient and appropriate funding source for such research, and NYSERDA has proven to be an efficient, dedicated administrator.

Thank you for considering our viewpoint.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David H. Gibson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

David H. Gibson
Executive Director

Cc: Chairman, NYSERDA
Adirondack Lake Survey Corporation
Acting Commissioner Denise Sheehan