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Jaclyn A. Brillling
Secretary, NYS Public Service Commission
3 Empire Plaza, Albany NY 12223-1350

RE: CASE 05-M-0090

Dear Mrs. Brillling:

We understand that the NYS Public Service Commission (PSC) is seeking public comment on whether to extend the System Benefits Charge (SBC) Program. The Nature Conservancy of New York is in strong support of **extending** this program at the fullest level for at least an additional five years because it is critical to New York State monitoring and research on **atmospheric** deposition – especially acid rain.

The SBC has been a major source of support for the Adirondack Long Term Monitoring (LTM) Project. As you may be aware, this is the longest, uninterrupted record (22 years) of lake chemistry in the Adirondacks, which samples 52 lakes throughout the Park every month. The SBC Program funds support this research and monitoring considered critical to The Nature Conservancy. In particular, baseline information on Adirondack surface water quality, as well as mercury, fine particles, ozone and other environmental information related to electricity generation are all important monitoring programs to continue. The SBC has also supported more recent research into the biological impacts of mercury through the Adirondack Cooperative Loon Program. Many users of this information, including The Nature Conservancy and the Adirondack Park, benefit from these research and monitoring efforts.

If this long-term monitoring program does not continue, then much of the public's investment in this information will be lost. As air pollution controls continue to be debated at the national level, it is essential that we have the ability to detect how changes in these controls ultimately impact New York's natural resources. Otherwise, it will not be possible to ensure that New York State's natural resources will benefit accordingly. Currently, the public benefits significantly from these research and monitoring efforts under the administration of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) through the Environmental Monitoring, Evaluations and Protection (EMEP) Program. In particular, we can now show that small signals of lake improvement are beginning to be detected. This establishes the necessary baseline of information to know how far we need to go before ecological recovery is achieved.

In summary, we view it as vitally important that this critical monitoring program continue uninterrupted.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on these programs and to express our strong support to extend the Systems Benefit Charge Program.

Regards,

Henry Pepper
State Director, The Nature Conservancy of New York

cc: Vincent A. Delorio, Chairman, NYSERDA
Corporate Plaza West, 286 Washington Avenue Extension, Albany NY 12203

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