



MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

STATE OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PROGRAM EFFICIENCY

S.6606– MAY

A.7372 – THIELE

Description: Allows the Attorney General to approve title transfers using title insurance for land acquisition for the purpose of land conservation

Justification

Under current law, any land acquisitions made for the purposes of land conservation by the State require the Attorney General to approve the title transfer to the people of the state of New York, with no mechanism for using title insurance. This is unlike virtually all other state and federal land acquisition programs.

By not allowing for the use of title insurance, NY materially slows down transactions, depriving communities across the state the benefit of land conservation. As a result, there are at least 96,000 acres of land and water valued at approximately \$154 million that are currently being held by land trusts awaiting state acquisition through the state open space conservation program. In 2020, the Department of Environmental Conservation and New York State Parks combined acquired a total of 6,005 acres, and in 2022, DEC acquired 4,416 acres. The current pace of state land conservation is extremely slow, and program reforms are needed for effective and efficient program implementation.

To meet the goals of New York’s Climate Action Plan, the New York State “30x30” legislation, and the recently approved Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act, the state must close gaps in the lengthy timeline to conserve open space and park resources. This legislation is one necessary reform that would improve the efficiency and efficacy of the state open space conservation program, by allowing for the use of title insurance.

**CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS
S.6606/A.7372— *State Open Space Conservation Program Efficiency***

CCE is a 120,000-member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment

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