

Warren County Board of Supervisors

RESOLUTION NO. 508 OF 2012

Resolution introduced by Supervisors Thomas, Taylor, Sokol, Monroe, Bentley, Wood, Kenny, Merlino and Conover

OPPOSING \$50 MILLION EXPENDITURE OF STATE FUNDS TO PURCHASE THE FORMER FINCH PRUYN FOREST LANDS

WHEREAS, the State of New York is in the process of acquiring tens of thousands of acres of productive working forestland in the heart of the Adirondacks to add these lands to the State Forest Preserve and permanently remove them from wood and job production for Fifty Million Dollars (\$50,000,000) and New York State taxpayers will now be responsible to pay the maintenance costs and property taxes on the acquired lands at a time when New York's economy is suffering and the rural communities of the Adirondacks struggle to survive, and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that as a result of the State's purchase of these lands, more than three hundred (300) jobs will be lost, said purchase will increase the expenses for all forest product companies in the Adirondack region, whether small, family owned sawmills or large paper mills who will be forced to obtain primary raw material from more distant forests and therefor affect their ability to remain in business, and

WHEREAS, for many years these lands have been leased for recreational purposes by sportsmen's clubs comprised of people from across the northeast who spend large amounts of time on these lands, spend money in local communities, providing a much needed revenue for merchants and sales tax for local governments, and now these leases and revenues will disappear and more than two hundred (200) camps will be eliminated, and

WHEREAS, there is an increasing interest in and demand for the use of wood and plant material, "biomass" as an alternative to fossil fuels for energy production, but understandably, biomass operators

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require some assurance that there will be a long-term, stable supply of wood available before making the sizeable investment necessary to site and build facilities, and

WHEREAS, the State Land Master Plan clearly states, “Due to the importance of the forest products industry to the economy of the Adirondack region, bulk acreage purchases in fee should not normally be made where highly productive forest land is involved, *unless such land is threatened with development that would curtail its use for forestry purposes or its value for the preservation of open space or of wildlife habitat.*”, and yet New York State has acquired three hundred thousand (300,000) acres of highly productive forest lands since the Master Plan was adopted, and

WHEREAS, not once since the possible acquisition of these lands first surfaced five (5) years ago has anyone made a credible argument that the lands, most of which are far-removed from easy public access, and all of which are owned by the Nature Conservancy and under the jurisdiction of the Adirondack Park Agency, were under any serious threat of residential or commercial development, yet the State has still chosen to acquire the lands and, in doing so, will accomplish exactly what the Master Plan says should be avoided - curtailing the use of the lands for forestry purposes, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Warren County Board of Supervisors hereby strongly opposes the Fifty Million (\$50,000,000) expenditure of New York State funds to purchase forest lands, and hereby requests that New York State provide local governments with a like sum of funding for a mitigation plan to be used for economic development to offset damages that would be caused by this purchase, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Warren County Board of Supervisors requests that Governor Cuomo order a study of the economic and social impacts of State land acquisitions in the Adirondacks before any additional purchases of State lands are authorized, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Warren County Board of Supervisors was receptive to the idea that the State would acquire only a portion of the property, while leaving the majority of the property to continue to be used in its current capacity as forestland, and be it further

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RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors be, and hereby is, authorized and directed to forward copies of this resolution to all other Counties of the Adirondacks; Governor Andrew M. Cuomo; Senator Charles E. Schumer; Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand; Congressman Christopher Gibson; Senator Elizabeth O’C. Little; Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward; the Adirondack Park Agency and DEC Commissioner Joe Martens; DEC Region 5 Director Robert Stegemann, DEC Region 6 Director Judy Drabicki, the Adirondack Local Government Review Board and the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages.

