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**NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF  
ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact: James J. Hanson**

**845.802.3138**

**[jhns@co.ulster.ny.us](mailto:jhns@co.ulster.ny.us)**

**COUNTY EXECUTIVE HEIN CALLS UPON NYC DEP TO FUFILL ITS  
“MORAL OBLIGATION” TO THE PEOPLE OF ULSTER COUNTY**

**The County Executive Schedules a Town Hall meeting with DEP officials for  
December 7, 2011 at Ulster County Community College.**

Kingston, NY - Ulster County Executive Mike Hein met today with recently appointed New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Carter Strickland and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens. In a show of unity, Assemblyman Peter Lopez and representatives from the Office's of Senator Chuck Schumer, Congressman Maurice Hinchey, Senator John Bonacic joined the County Executive at the Ulster County office building. The purpose of this meeting was clear. The entire relationship between the DEP and the citizens of Ulster County must change.

“Enough is enough. The people of Ulster County have been more than patient with the DEP but our patience has run out,” said County Executive Hein. We have waited for the DEP to stop polluting our pristine waterways but they have not; we have waited for them to make good on providing sufficient resources to the people of Wawarsing whose homes they have destroyed, and they have not; and we have waited patiently for the DEP to pay their fair share of property taxes for the land they have occupied for generations, but still they do not. The time for patiently waiting has passed and the DEP must fulfill its ‘moral obligation’ to the people of Ulster County and make these things right.”

1. County Executive Hein called upon the DEP to immediately begin releases into the Lower Esopus with the clearest water available and significantly lower overall reservoir levels to better protect downstream residents from flooding. The residents of Ulster County should not have to choose between polluted water and flooded living rooms.

“The DEP should be releasing the same clarity water being sent to New York City residents,” said County Executive Hein. The health of the children of Ulster County is just as important as the health of a child in Manhattan.”

2. The County Executive requested that the DEP increase the funding level for the Wawarsing buyout program. Many residents of Wawarsing have been punished by years of denials and foot dragging and as a result have had to live with mold, sewer water

damage and declining property values. It is the County Executive's belief that the DEP has allocated insufficient resources to solve this problem.

3. He also requested that the DEP begin to pay their fair share in local property taxes for the land they occupy in Ulster County. The DEP could never replace the system they have created for the value they are being assessed. The result is DEP is effectively shirking their responsibility to pay the correct amount of property taxes and shifting this unmet tax burden on to the local Ulster County property taxpayers. The DEP has used their legal staff to overwhelm local town resources in order to force settlements.

County Executive Hein continued, "It is clear that the New York City DEP wants cheap water, but their legacy is to get it at the expense of the citizens of Ulster County."

County Executive Hein is setting a public Town Hall meeting with Ulster County's citizens, elected representatives and staff from Mayor Bloomberg's administration in addition to DEP, DEC and EPA staff. The people of Ulster County have an absolute right to voice their concerns and get answers from those responsible.

The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 7, 2011 at the Ulster County Community College. It will take place at 6:30pm at Vanderlyn Hall in the college lounge. Interested participants should RSVP to [exec@co.ulster.ny.us](mailto:exec@co.ulster.ny.us).

Other issues covered at the meeting were the damage to properties along the Lower Esopus and a municipal septic system in the hamlet of Phoenicia.

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