

For immediate release

Contact: Gerry Geist, Executive Director
Association of Towns, (518)465-7933



AOT Leadership Votes to Support Ballot Prop. 3

The proposal would simplify the process for municipalities in the Adirondacks and Catskills to gain approval for projects

ALBANY, NY – An initiative seeking to establish a 250-acre land bank for small projects in two protected state parks that will appear on the November ballot now enjoys on-the-record support from the Association of Towns of the State of New York.

The Association of Towns' Executive Committee, its governing board, voted unanimously in a special meeting on October 17 to support the measure.

Currently, due to state forest protection, any town or village located in either the Adirondack or Catskill parks seeking to make improvements to failing infrastructure or crumbling roadways needs a constitutional amendment to do so. The process can become drawn-out and costly for the municipalities, which are often small in size and budget. Under the new proposal, the land bank can be drawn upon for projects contributing to the health and safety of residents.

“This proposal ensures that the state forest is not diminished while also boosting the autonomy of local governments to make important quality of life improvements for their residents. It’s a much more judicious way of handling these projects, and we believe it will serve our members in both state parks very well,” said AOT Executive Director Gerry Geist.

“The ballot measure would cut a lot of proverbial red tape and make it easier for state park towns and villages to fix road hazards, provide clean drinking water to residents and develop bike or recreational trails,” AOT President Betty Neville said. “As I understand it, the current process can add actual years to a project, so we view this as a great compromise that benefits both the people of New York State and the local governments seeking to deliver services in a cost-effective way.”

The proposal will appear on the ballot on Election Day alongside two other proposals, regarding whether to hold a constitutional convention (Prop. 1) and the ability to revoke state pensions in the matter of a felony (Prop. 2).

The Executive Committee oversees AOT operations as its governing board and works with Association staff on key legislative issues at the state and federal level. The president and five vice presidents are each elected at the Association's Annual Business Meeting by the delegation. Eight other officials from the membership at large make up the rest of the Executive Committee. The Association of Towns provides legal and technical training and advocacy for the 932 towns in New York State; 901 towns are dues-paying members in 2017.

###