



NORTH COUNTRY LIBRARY SYSTEM

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Director: Stephen B. Bolton

This letter was sent Assemblywomen Russell and
and Tenney, Assemblymen Barclay and Blankenbush,
Senators Ritchie and Griffo

February 4, 2011

Dear ,

Governor Cuomo is taking many difficult steps to resolve the State budget deficit. Unfortunately for libraries of all types, he has ignored the history of cuts already endured by libraries. State aid for many segments of the budget has grown too large and too fast, but this is not the case for libraries:

- State aid for Libraries in the 2007/08 budget was \$102.8 million.
- In the current 2010/11 budget aid to libraries has already been reduced to \$83.6 million.
- The 2011/12 budget would cut libraries to \$76 million.
A 26% DECREASE from 2007/08!!

The Governor emphasized two points in his budget speech:

- The State government should provide services to the people, not create huge bureaucracies.
- The State government has created formulas that guarantee built-in increases.

Point one: Libraries do not have a huge bureaucracy. Everything we do is directly aimed at providing services to people. The 65 libraries in our four counties have over 150,000 active library patrons! The money for libraries also benefits school, college and hospital libraries.

Point two: Libraries have never shared the advantage of automatic cost-of-living increases. Quite the opposite: **THE PROPOSED BUDGET WOULD REDUCE LIBRARY SUPPORT TO THE LEVEL RECEIVED IN 1993.** When the rate of inflation is taken into account, 51% since 1993, you begin to get the picture of how far we have fallen.

The attached article was placed on the Watertown Daily Times editorial page last year as an op-ed piece. I could update the numbers, libraries received two more cuts in the 2010/11 budget, but the message remains the same. Across-the-board cuts are unfair when they do not consider the reductions already in place for public, school, college and hospital libraries.

In these difficult times, libraries act as an information leveler, and help people who are willing to help themselves. Libraries do not deserve to be cut disproportionately.

Sincerely,

Stephen B. Bolton