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February 26, 2008

Congressman Charles B. Rangel
House of Representatives
2354 Rayburn-Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515-3215

Honorable Congressman Rangel:

I write to you as the chair of the New York City Council's Environmental Conservation Committee in support of HR 1576, legislation that will make permanent enhanced incentives for landowners who donate their property for conservation purposes.

As you know, HR 1576 provides federal tax incentives to encourage donations of property that would protect surface drinking water supply lands in New York and around the nation. The New York City Council supports ongoing efforts to protect water quality in the Catskill and Delaware watersheds, both to provide an ongoing source of healthy drinking water for our citizens, and to avoid the costly alternative of building a multi-billion dollar filtration plant and system.

HR 1576 makes permanent tax incentives that will otherwise have expired on December 31, 2007. The expiring incentives particularly help agricultural and other modest-income landowners to take a higher percentage of their income as a deduction over a longer period of time. I believe making this incentive permanent will provide an important tool for New York City and others interested in watershed protection in New York. I am encouraged that so many of your colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, are not only supporting HR 1576, but have signed on as co-sponsors.

As you know, the Senate has passed a Farm Bill that includes a provision making the new conservation tax incentive permanent. I understand that the House-Senate Conference Committee on the Farm Bill has begun. I am writing to thank you for your past leadership to bring clean drinking water to our constituents and to all those who depend on the New York City water system. I urge you to do everything you can in the conference committee process to make the incentives contained in HR 1576 permanent.

Sincerely,


James Gennaro

All the Best!