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GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL

**GOVERNOR HOCHUL ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT TO PROTECT PRISTINE
CAYUGA LAKE WATERFRONT PROPERTY**

***Governor Announces Agreement Between Finger Lakes Land Trust and New York
State Electric & Gas***

***Agreement Secures Future Protection of the Largest Privately-Owned Shoreline
Parcel along Cayuga Lake in the Finger Lakes***

Finger Lakes Land Trust Will Acquire 470-Acre Bell Station Parcel

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced a land purchase agreement has been reached between the Finger Lakes Land Trust and New York State Electric & Gas Corp. for the 470-Acre Bell Station, the largest privately-owned undeveloped lake shoreline in the Finger Lakes. Governor Hochul in September announced that NYSEG had canceled the auction of land known as Bell Station with 3,400 feet of pristine shoreline on the east side of Cayuga Lake in Tompkins County, and that three state agencies would facilitate permanent protection of this parcel and maximize public access.

"The purchase of this land will guarantee its protection and preservation for future generations - making environmentally conscious decisions like this allow us peace of mind knowing our children and their children will have access to green space and a beautiful lakeview in the Finger Lakes," **Governor Hochul said.** "I am proud of the hard work and collaboration between our state agencies, NYSEG, and the Finger Lakes Land Trust to quickly move ahead with the sale agreement that will pave the way for the transfer of ownership of Bell Station."

DEC and the Finger Lakes Land Trust will create a public wildlife management area on the lakeshore portion of the property. Bell Station is recognized as a priority project in New York State's Open Space Plan and designated as future public access conservation land in the Town of Lansing Comprehensive Plan. The property sale does not require further review or approval by the Public Service Commission.

Cayuga Lake is a critical resource for drinking water, tourism, and recreation in the region. Preserving Bell Station will help protect critical habitat for plants and wildlife, and greatly enhance public recreation opportunities by providing direct shoreline access to

the east side of Cayuga Lake, which is 90 percent privately-owned. The lake supports incredible sport fisheries, including largemouth bass, chain pickerel, northern pike, crappie, yellow perch, sunfish, gar, and bowfin. It is intended that the easternmost portion of the property will be utilized for the production of renewable solar energy.

Cayuga Lake is also designated as an important bird area by New York Audubon and supports a large and diverse population of waterfowl and other birds, particularly during migration and winter. Increased access to unique areas like this provides important economic opportunities to local communities to capitalize on the growing popularity of outdoor recreation, while also protecting the natural buffers that protect water quality. Protecting the lake from lakeshore development and erosion will protect water quality in a public drinking water supply and help reduce the threat of harmful algal blooms.

Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos said, "The land purchase agreement between the Finger Lakes Land Trust and NYSEG to preserve the environmentally sensitive 470-acre Bell Station property is a major victory for conservation efforts in the Finger Lakes region and an example of Governor Hochul's commitment to the environment. Preserving Bell Station will help protect critical habitat and ecosystems that support water quality in Cayuga Lake and promote recreational opportunities that support the local economy. DEC is grateful to the Governor for her leadership in securing this agreement and thankful to NYSEG for recognizing the environmental value in protecting this property. We look forward to working with the Finger Lakes Land Trust to conserve this unique parcel on the lakefront for future generations of visitors to experience and enjoy."

State Parks Commissioner Erik Kulleseid said, "Bell Station is across Cayuga Lake to the north from Taughannock State Park. Under the leadership of Governor Hochul, this acquisition will both protect that lakeview, as well as the water quality of the creeks and streams that flow from Bell Station into the lake. We look forward to working with DPS and DEC on this important conservation effort."

President and CEO of NYSEG Carl A. Taylor said, "NYSEG is committed to being a good corporate citizen and I'm pleased that we were able to quickly reach an agreement with the Finger Lakes Land Trust to preserve this pristine piece of property. I'd would like to thank Governor Hochul and her administration for their leadership and collaboration as we mutually sought to conserve the Bell Station, a decision that will benefit the Finger Lakes Region for years to come."

Senator Pamela Helming said, "Thank you to Finger Lakes Land Trust and NYSEG for working together to reach an agreement which will facilitate the further conservation and protection of this important property. This is welcome news for the thousands of residents across our region who will be able to enjoy this pristine area of Cayuga Lake's shoreline for generations to come. The preservation of this land is also important for the protection of our local water quality for the thousands of residents who rely on Cayuga Lake for their drinking water. Thank you to Finger Lakes Land Trust, NYSEG, the Public Service Commission, New York State Department of Conservation, and the numerous

organizations and constituents in Lansing and the surrounding area for their advocacy. And thank you especially to Governor Hochul for listening to our concerns and recommendations, and facilitating further action that benefits the community and preserves this remarkably diverse natural resource we are so fortunate to have."

Assemblymember Anna Kelles said, "I want to thank Governor Hochul the Department of Public Service, the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Department of Parks, and NYSEG for responding so expeditiously to the significant public outcry to preserve the Bell Station property as protected state forestlands. This large tract of pristine shoreline and forestlands serve a critically important role in preserving the health and integrity of the lake. Preserving the forestlands will not only protect the lake from land erosion runoff and negative impacts of shoreline septic systems but will preserve the land for tourism and ecological education. Our collective commitment to preservation is paramount and the governor's role in this effort is deeply appreciated."

Chairwoman of the Tompkins County Legislature Leslyn McBean-Clairborne said, "This agreement is historic for our region and our local partners. Tompkins County has deep gratitude for New York State and Governor Hochul's commitment to conservation and public access to land in our gorgeous Finger Lakes region and applaud NYSEG and the Finger Lakes Land Trust for their partnership in making this happen. There is an incredible history of conservation and sustainability in the region, and this is another inspiring example of dedication to these tenets."

Tompkins County Legislator Mike Sigler said, "It's been eight years since we had a public meeting about the Finger Lakes Land Trust possibly taking over of the Bell property. This would not be happening without the Governor stepping in. There's so little public access to Lake Cayuga. We can debate what should be done with the land, but for now I'm happy to see that it will be preserved and opened eventually to everyone. I've hiked FLLT land and no one does a better job of keeping land like this open and preserved. Some will argue this land should be developed to maximize tax revenue. I understand what they're saying, but we can't and shouldn't do that with every parcel. If we did, there would be no public space and that would hurt all of us."

Finger Lakes Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp said, "This is a tremendous win for the Finger Lakes and all residents of New York State. We are grateful for Governor Hochul's leadership and for all of our elected officials pulling together to make this happen."

CEO of the Department of Public Service Rory M. Christian said, "The signing of the purchase agreement between the Finger Lake Land Trust and NYSEG guarantees the strengthening of New York's commitment to land conservation across the State. My agency is pleased to have played a role in protecting this environmentally sensitive property for future generations."

Steward and Executive Director of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network Dr. Hilary Lambert said, "This is wonderful news for land and water protection on Cayuga Lake's increasingly crowded shore. It is also great news for hikers and paddlers, who will have a beautiful new place that allows public access.

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