

*Washington, DC* - In an effort to prevent the discontinuation of streamgages across New York that provide valuable flood forecasting and warning information, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today met in his Washington, DC office with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Director Suzette Kimball, whose agency manages streamgages. Hinchey and Kimball both agreed that streamgages are extremely valuable resources that need to be saved. The congressman expressed particular concern over the possible discontinuation of streamgages in the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers and the Esopus and Wallkill basins. Hinchey vowed to use his position on the House Appropriations Committee to fight for the additional funding Kimball said is needed to maintain the operation of streamgages in the short and long-term.

"These streamgages require a minimal upfront investment and pay off in huge ways by providing flood forecasting and warnings that help prevent the loss of life and property," Hinchey said. "I appreciated having the opportunity to sit down with USGS Director Kimball and am pleased to learn that she is working hard to find ways to maintain the dozens of streamgages that are currently in operation across New York. I am committed to fighting for increased federal funding for USGS that will ensure the agency has all of the funding it needs to keep these streamgages operating."

Earlier this year, USGS announced that dozens of streamgages across New York will lose their funding and be shut down. This was due to the fact that many of these streamgages are actually funded by local partners such as the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which are pulling back funds because of budget cuts. During today's meeting, Hinchey vowed to fight for increased funding for USGS so the agency is not dependent on funding from other agencies to fund streamgages.

Immediately after these cuts were announced, Hinchey wrote to USGS Director Kimball asking to meet with her and suggesting that she use funding from the economic stimulus measure to bridge any gaps that this year's budget cuts may cause. As a result of pressure from Hinchey and others, USGS announced on April 8 that funding will be restored for 17 of the most critical streamgages along the Susquehanna, Delaware, and Wallkill river basins. The additional funds were made available as the result of USGS re-programming money and through a compromise reached with NYC DEP. The agreement USGS announced, however, did not cover all streamgages. According to USGS, at least nine high priority streamgages in upstate New York are still scheduled to lose funding this year.

Streamgages are used by the National Weather Service to provide flood forecasting and

warning information. They also help monitor the flow of waterways to support recreational activities.