

Funds Will Help Pay for Lease of Ferry & Newburgh Parking Lots

Newburgh, NY - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Congressman John Hall (D-NY) today announced they secured \$1.33 million in new federal funding to ensure the Newburgh-Beacon ferry continues its operations through the 2011 season. Hinchey and Hall jointly requested that the funds be included in the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009, which President Obama signed into law earlier this month.

"Providing ferry service between Newburgh and Beacon is critical to linking Newburgh and eastern Orange County with commuter rail service to New York City and reestablishing the historic link between Newburgh and Beacon," Hinchey said. "These federal funds will ensure that the successful ferry service we've established between these two waterfronts continues for years to come. By providing an efficient and enjoyable alternative to driving, we are saving people time and gas while also helping to reduce traffic during rush hour on overcrowded local roads. Additionally, continued ferry service will bring more people to the Newburgh waterfront and help promote economic activity at the growing number of restaurants and shops located there."

"The continuation of the Newburgh-Beacon Ferry is vital to our ongoing efforts to invigorate the Hudson Valley economy," said Hall. "The ferry supports the goal of moving more commuters out of their cars and into mass transit. As Orange County grows, the ferry will only grow in importance, as it maintains the accessibility of New York City jobs for workers living in New Windsor, Vails Gate, Cornwall, and other parts of eastern Orange County."

The new federal funds that Hinchey and Hall obtained will help continue the boat lease agreement between Metro-North and NY Waterway, which provides the ferry that runs between the Newburgh ferry dock and the City of Beacon's Metro-North commuter rail station. Additionally, the federal funds will help pay to lease the commuter parking lot in Newburgh, as well as landscape upgrades and improvements to the current lots. Parking at the Newburgh waterfront is free, and discounted commuter passes for the ferry service are available.

"Metro-North is grateful to Congressmen Hall and Hinchey for the financial support they continue to provide to our very successful ferry service between Newburgh and Beacon that gives Orange County residents convenient access to Metro-North's Hudson Line," said

Metro-North President Howard Permut. "In these times of economic uncertainty, it is good to know that the ferry service will continue until at least the fall of 2011.

Ferry service between Newburgh and Beacon was terminated in 1963 when the first span of the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge was opened. In 1996, Hinchey began his efforts to bring back the commuter ferry, which ultimately led to the restoration of service in October 2005. The ferry currently handles 500 boardings a day, connecting Orange County residents with rail service to New York City from Beacon on the east side of the Hudson River.

Hinchey, whose congressional district previously included the City of Beacon prior to the last redistricting changes, initiated work with the Army Corps of Engineers on a plan to enable the reconstruction of that city's ferry dock in 1996. Hinchey also secured \$187,000 in federal grant funding for a Newburgh study on waterfront improvements and helped to initiate a 2001 study on the feasibility of ferry service being restarted. Subsequent to the study, Hinchey worked to obtain \$3.6 million in U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grants and loans to fund dock construction and improvements in both cities. In 2003, Hinchey secured \$900,000 from Congress to fund additional ferry infrastructure and an additional \$750,000 in federal funds were secured to cover the lease of a ferry from NY Waterway. Hinchey has also worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to obtain the necessary permits for the ferry docks at Newburgh and Beacon. Hinchey and Hall worked together to obtain additional funding to continue the successful and growing ferry service.