

*□ Congressman Will Be Honored for Work to Protect Environment from Fracking & All Other Environmental Accomplishments He Achieved Over Nearly Four Decades in Public Office*

Sunday, June 24, 2012

6:00pm Award Ceremony

(full event runs from 4:00pm-7:00pm)

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Kingston, NY -- In recognition of his strong commitment and leadership to clean water and environmental protection throughout his nearly four decades in public service, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) will receive the Clean Water Champion Award from Riverkeeper at a celebratory event in Kingston on Sunday, June 24. From protecting drinking water supplies from the toxic chemicals used in the controversial natural gas extraction method known as hydraulic fracturing to leading the effort to cleanup PCBs in the Hudson River, Hinchey has fully devoted his life in public service to protecting New York's water sources as well as those throughout the country.

"I am incredibly honored and humbled to receive Riverkeeper's Clean Water Champion Award," Hinchey said. "Water is the most basic life element for humans and all species and we have a moral obligation to do everything we can to protect it for this and all future generations. Having

grown up on the banks of the Hudson River in Saugerties, protecting the Hudson and all water sources throughout New York and across the country has always been a special priority for me. We have achieved many great things over the years, but we must continue to stay vigilant, particularly as oil and gas companies and other private industries look to exploit our water supplies for their own benefit. I remain confident, as I always have, that together we can unite to continue to protect the Hudson River and all other water sources across this great state and nation. While I may soon be leaving public office, I remain fully committed to doing everything I can as a private citizen to fight for clean water."

The Clean Water Champion Award, previously known as the Champion of Our Waterways award, honor those who have given exemplary service to the Hudson River and its tributaries, in support of Riverkeeper's and the Clean Water Act's goals of achieving swimmable, fishable and drinkable water. Hinchey will receive his award during an event called Save Our Beer, which Riverkeeper, Environmental Advocates of New York, Catskill Mountainkeeper and other New York Water Rangers coalition members hosted to draw attention to the dangers that hydraulic fracturing poses to drinking water supplies.

Paul Gallay, President and Hudson Riverkeeper, said: "Whether it's fighting to make GE accountable for PCB pollution in the Hudson, or to protect communities from fracking, Congressman Hinchey has been a true champion for clean water. Riverkeeper is proud to recognize his record of public service protecting the environment, especially the Hudson River."

Riverkeeper is honoring Hinchey for his achievements in the New York State Assembly, where he served as chairman of the Environmental Conservation Committee, and in the U.S. House of Representatives where he currently serves a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and the Environment, which allocates funding to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of the Interior. Hinchey previously served on the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Some of the environmental highlights of Hinchey's career include:

- Under Hinchey's leadership as Chairman of the New York State Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee, the panel conducted a successful investigation into the causes of "Love Canal," the nation's first major toxic dumpsite, and developed landmark environmental legislation including the nation's first law to control acid rain.

- Hinchey successfully led the fight, first in Albany and later in Washington, to force General Electric to pay for and clean up the 1.3 million pounds of PCBs it dumped into the Hudson River between 1947 and 1977. Dating back to his days as Chair of the State Assembly's Environmental Conservation Committee, Hinchey fought against numerous attempts to delay and narrow the clean-up process, and he worked tirelessly to make sure the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency held GE responsible for the cleanup. In 2011, Hinchey visited the upper Hudson River to laud the commencement of the second and final phase of the cleanup as a critical step forward in removing PCB contamination that has plagued the Hudson River for many decades.

- As an assemblyman, Hinchey developed the statewide system of Urban Cultural Parks, including those in Kingston and Binghamton and authored the legislation that created the Hudson River Valley Greenway. He built on this accomplishment later, as a member of Congress, by writing and championing the passage of legislation that created the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, giving the region national prominence as well as access to increased federal resources.

- In his first year in Congress, Hinchey helped to initiate and spearhead the successful legislative effort to preserve more than 15,000 acres in Sterling Forest, the last significant area of open space in the New York metropolitan region and an important watershed for southeastern New York and northern New Jersey.

- In 2007, Hinchey led the effort to establish The Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC) -- a not-for-profit entity in upstate New York that brings together private solar companies and research institutions throughout the state to develop new ways to efficiently and effectively develop economically viable solar technologies. The results have been extraordinary. Hinchey and TSEC have attracted numerous companies to upstate New York and helped create more than 600 solar energy-related jobs with many more on the way.

- Hinchey is the primary leader in Congress to protect drinking water and the environment from the risks of hydraulic fracturing. He is a co-author of the FRAC Act, which would mandate public disclosure of chemicals used in fracking fluid and allow the EPA to regulate fracking activities under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

- In 2009, Hinchey authored the appropriations language that initiated the EPA's current national study on hydraulic fracturing. This is the first comprehensive and independent analysis of the risks that hydraulic fracturing poses to drinking water.

Riverkeeper's mission is to protect the environmental, recreational and commercial integrity of the Hudson River and its tributaries, and safeguard the drinking water of 9 million New York City and Hudson Valley residents. The group is known as the public's investigator, scientist, lawyer, lobbyist and public relations agent for the Hudson River.

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