



**NEW YORK STATE
ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.**
For the Birders and Birds of the Empire State since 1948

Governor David Paterson
Executive Chambers
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

May 30, 2008

Dear Governor Paterson:

I am writing on behalf of our organization regarding potential development of the former Grumman property in Calverton, Suffolk County, NY, now known as the Enterprise Park at Calverton (EPCAL). The NY State Ornithological Assoc. (NYSOA) is the umbrella group for bird clubs and related organizations in the state with 45 member organizations representing over 25,000 members, in addition to our 650 individual members.

The objectives of NYSOA are:

to document the ornithology of the state, to foster interest in and appreciation of birds and to protect birds and their habitats.

In that spirit, we wish to thank New York State for the position recently taken by the Department of Environmental Conservation regarding development of the EPCAL property. The ecological values of this last remaining large grassland on Long Island have long been recognized by birders who know of its varied habitats, and their unique avian inhabitants—a number of which are listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern.

Recently, because of the influx of Short-eared Owls—a state endangered species—at this site this past winter and well into spring, the future of EPCAL has become an urgent issue. Although the Town of Riverhead controls these lands, they are of statewide significance. Any future development there should only be considered with this in mind. A wide range of parties has interests and concerns in EPCAL. A full and complete public discussion of issues is needed before any decisions on developing this property.

In addition to the presence of at-risk birds and other species, drinking water quality, transportation infrastructure, air pollution, the Peconic River and Long Island Sound watersheds, and quality of life issues all need to be considered and addressed. The plans by the Town of Riverhead to move ahead a large-scale industrial and commercial recreation complex on the property raise serious concerns over all these matters.

The recent action by NYS DEC requesting a halt to work on this development pending an environmental assessment of the EPCAL lands is welcomed and necessary—as is the Town of Riverhead’s agreement to this approach. This pause will allow an impartial, experienced agency, with a regional perspective, to evaluate the property and determine what issues need to be addressed before the grasslands are developed. We hope you will support and encourage DEC to continue their efforts to protect EPCAL, and to resist pressures to alter the area without adequate review and consideration of environmental issues.

NYSOA commends the leadership of the DEC in this matter and hopes that all state officials will give it swift and mindful attention.

Sincerely,

William Ostrander, President

cc: NY State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner
Alexander Grannis
NY State Department of Environmental Conservatio Region 1 Director
Peter Scully
The Honorable Marc Alessi Assemblymember
The Honorable Fred Theile, Assemblymember
The Honorable Kenneth Lavalley, State Senator
Riverhead Town Supervisor Phil Cardinale