



ULSTER COUNTY NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.C. Legislative Chairman, David B. Donaldson, Is Calling On Ulster Residents To Boycott Activities At Hunter And Windham Mountain Ski Areas

Ulster County Legislature Chairman David B. Donaldson is urging local residents to show their support for Belleayre Mountain, one of the largest tourism attractions in Ulster County, by boycotting Hunter and Windham as their festival season begins and into their ski season if they continue. Donaldson's stance is in response to Greene County officials and ski center operators non-stop attacks over the past year on Belleayre Mountain and its status as a state-owned and operated ski center.

"These attacks on Belleayre, which has always been state-operated and was created before Hunter and Windham, are unfounded and unjustified," Donaldson said. "Any cuts to Belleayre Mountain would seriously affect Ulster County's tax base and revenues as well as impact employment opportunities for Ulster residents. I am urging Ulster County residents to stick together and defend Belleayre against unjustified criticism and if they continue, I urge Ulster residents to boycott Hunter and Windham."

Donaldson said it is unfortunate that State Sen. Seward, Interim Greene County Administrator Daniel Frank and Greene County Legislature Chairman Wayne Speenburgh, along with the operators of Hunter and Windham, have worked to get a bill passed in both the Assembly and State Senate to establish a blue ribbon committee to "examine unfair competition in the outdoor

recreation industry.”

This bill is targeted at Belleayre Mountain Ski Center, a state facility mandated by the New York State Constitution and re-affirmed in an amendment passed by the voters of the State in 1987. If this legislation becomes law, it calls into question the State’s right to provide low cost recreation for its citizens. Are they going to study the impact of Jones Beach? Bethpage Golf Course? State Campgrounds? And how about local parks, pools and the like, that receive State funding?

When they finish studying the impact of State recreation outdoors - will they then study the impact of the State University system on private colleges? The State has legitimate interest in operating recreation facilities and does it well and in line with its mandates. The study being proposed is a waste of time and money, so “Make no mistake this is aimed directly at Belleayre,” Donaldson said. “Private interests in Greene County are looking for a competitive advantage by attacking Belleayre. New York State is mandated by the Constitution to operate Belleayre in a manner that benefits its citizens and provides an economic catalyst for the local community. It is succeeding in both. Real estate interests in Greene County do not trump the will of the people of the State of New York and the economic interests of Ulster County.”

Donaldson urged Gov. Paterson not to sign Sen. Seward’s bill and protect the right of the citizens of New York to provide public recreation at a reasonable price for all its citizens – not just the rich.

“Belleayre makes skiing affordable to everyone,” Donaldson said, “and it provides a tremendous product that everyone should be able to continue to enjoy. Ulster County does not intend to allow anything to occur which will damage Belleayre’s right to operate a reasonable, first-rate ski area.”