



**For Immediate Release**

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

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**Green rooftops in New York City now rewarded with tax credits;**  
State passes bill to encourage roofs that cut energy, reduce sewage overflows

Building owners in New York City who install green rooftops will now receive a significant tax credit under a bill (A.11226) sponsored by Assemblyman Ruben Diaz Jr. that passed the state legislature today. Under this law, building owners in New York City who install green roofs on at least 50 percent of available rooftop space can apply for a one-year property tax credit of up to \$100,000. The credit would be equal to \$4.50 per square-foot of roof area that is planted with vegetation, or approximately 25 percent of the typical costs associated with the materials, labor, installation and design of the green roof.

The legislation was championed by the S.W.I.M. (Storm Water Infrastructure Matters) Coalition, comprised of more than 50 city, state and national organizations dedicated to ensuring fishable and swimmable waters around New York through natural, sustainable storm water management practices. The S.W.I.M. Coalition, building off of its recent success in the passage of New York City Local Law 5, advocated for the passage of this green roof tax abatement. Advocacy included working with Assembly Member Diaz, Jr. to sponsor the bill, and meeting with key elected officials in Albany this May to recommend that it be passed this session.

“This tax abatement will act as an economic stimulus by creating living wage green-collar jobs that are pathways out of poverty,” said Rob Crauderueff, Director of Sustainable Policy at Sustainable South Bronx and chair of the Storm Water Infrastructure Matters (S.W.I.M.) policy committee.

“Green rooftops can save New York City residents more than \$5 million in energy cooling costs, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce overflows of raw sewage by easing pressure on the city’s overburdened sewer system – which will help to achieve swimmable and fishable waterways in neighborhoods throughout New York City,” said Larry Levine, attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council’s (NRDC).

Green roofs also address New York’s environmental justice problems, explained Kate Zidar, Senior Environmental Planner of Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice. “Green roofs reduce costly environmental burdens, such as poor air quality and sewage treatment processing, in communities throughout New York City, especially environmental justice communities that host more than their share of environmental burdens”.

The benefits of green roofs are measurable, according to Dr. Paul S. Mankiewicz, Gaia Institute Executive Director, and board member of the New York City Soil & Water Conservation District. “Each 10,000 square foot green roof can capture between 6,000 and 12,000 gallons of water in each storm event. This is rainfall that will never enter the combined sewer. At the same time, the evaporation of this rainfall will produce the equivalent of between a thousand and two thousand tons of air conditioning, enough heat removal to noticeably cool ten acres of the City. This is a management practice that increases biodiversity and can literally add enjoyable landscape to all the boroughs of New York”.

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Riverkeeper Chief Investigator Basil Seggos added, “by incentivizing green roof construction, this legislation will enable New York City to become greener, cleaner and more energy efficient. And our waterways will benefit from smaller volumes of raw sewage as a result”.

This green roof incentive builds off of the success of a greening initiative in the Bronx. Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Jr. stated, “My Bronx Initiative for Energy and the Environment has funded fifteen green roofs on non-profits in the Bronx. Because of this Bronx green roof movement, business owners have been seeking green roof funding, similar to the NYSERDA programs for solar panels. This tax abatement will put green roof technology financially in reach of New York City businesses”.

Building owners will be able to apply for the credit starting Jan. 1, 2009. This is a pilot program that will expire after March 15, 2013, unless it is extended.

Find out more about the S.W.I.M. Coalition at: <http://www.swimmablenyc.info>.