

Save the Mountain

United to Preserve Catskill Park Communities & Environment

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GROUPS UNITE TO SAVE BELLEAYRE MOUNTAIN AND CATSKILL PARK FROM INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT

SavetheMountain.net is Umbrella for Belleayre Resort Opposition

(Highmount, NY -- October 31, 2007) Save the Mountain is a new coalition of groups and individuals formed to oppose the Agreement in Principle and the very large Belleayre Resort at Catskill Park. www.SavetheMountain.net They plan to participate fully in the SEQR process.

“We are united in our determination to protect the Catskill Park and forest preserve that belongs to all New Yorkers, and the economy and quality of life of the mountain communities here. The proposed Belleayre Resort is the wrong kind of growth for this area,” said Julie McQuain of the Hardenburgh Association of Residents and Taxpayers (HART) a Save the Mountain group.

The Agreement in Principle (AIP) announced September 5th was negotiated behind closed doors at the direction of Governor Eliot Spitzer, and facilitated by Judith Enck in the Governor's chambers. The “compromise” reached there scaled back the huge development proposal by only some 15 percent, moved buildings proposed for two slopes onto one, and added extensive high-elevation construction.

Sierra Club announced today that it will not sign the Agreement. With 1.3 million members, 42,000 in New York, The Sierra Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization.

“One of Sierra Club’s main concerns is the quality of NYC’s drinking water,” said Carolyn Zolas, Clean Water/Watershed Committee Chair, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter. “The runoff from this development could pollute the water and will promote secondary growth throughout Catskill Park. If the Catskill Delaware watershed is overdeveloped, as was Croton, it will result in a filtration order at a cost of \$20-30 billion to taxpayers.” www.newyork.sierraclub.org

Catskill Heritage Alliance is one of the groups working to achieve a reasonable compromise on the project.

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“Saving 1200 acres at elevations of 2700’ from development is a significant contribution to the Catskill Park. However the AIP sacrifices the western ridge of Belleayre and allows desecration of over 700 acres up to elevations of 3100’ with roads and buildings on slopes greater than 20%. Think of the precedent this would set for the rest of the Catskill Park,” said Richard Schaedle, Chairman of Catskill Heritage Alliance. www.CatskillHeritage.org

The Belleayre Resort at Catskill Park is a huge development proposed for the western slope of Belleayre Mountain at the intersection of Routes 28 and 49A in Highmount, NY, with buildings and roads continuing up the steep slopes to over 3000’ in elevation. The location is within in the Catskill Park, in the NYC watershed and borders constitutionally protected, forever wild forest preserve lands rich in wildlife, and taxpayer owned, DEC managed Belleayre Ski Center.

Proposed by Crossroads Ventures, LLC with partners Dean Gitter, Emily Fisher and Ken Pasternak, it now consists of two developments totaling 629 "units" of various sizes, an 18-hole golf course, driving range, clubhouse, two hotels, two spas -- one underground, five restaurants, ten retail stores, conference center, parking, roads, gates, security guards, street lighting, service buildings and other structures not yet detailed.

“Nature and humanity are interconnected entities. If we protect nature we protect ourselves and our future,” said Freddi Dunleavey of the Highmount Preservation Association (HPA).

Also joining with Save the Mountain are Friends of Catskill Park and the Pine Hill Water District Coalition.

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