



*A Coalition of Civic, Greening, Recreation and Economic Development Groups*

**STATE and federal legislation committee**

**New Yorkers for Parks Testimony  
in OPPOSITION TO THE ALIENATION OF PARKLAND  
- HOME RULE MESSAGE 50**

March 3, 2004

Good morning. My name is Allison Farina and I am the Director of Government and Community Affairs at New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P), a citywide advocacy organization working to protect and promote New York City's 28,700 acres of parkland.

I am here today to oppose the taking of more than 40 acres of beautiful parkland in Van Cortlandt Park for use as a water filtration plant.

No one can question the need to preserve parkland in New York City. It is a rare commodity. Parks clean the air, provide places for our children to play and learn, turn neighborhoods into communities, and help keep NYC green.

Regardless of these facts, a disregard for public open space is a disturbing trend. In addition to the proposed alienation of an estimated 50 acres in Van Cortlandt Park, portions of many parks throughout the city are being used for non-park purposes. NY4P has documented many incidences of parks being used inappropriately, including parks being used as spaces for construction equipment, composting facilities, waste transfer stations, Department of Education classrooms, parking lots, and cheap land for city development projects.

Even more troublesome is the fact that in many of these cases, the taking of public parkland has occurred without appropriate levels of environmental review and public input.

NY4P's primary role is to protect and preserve New York City's parkland. Park alienation undermines this objective and lessens the city's quality of

life. Therefore, NY4P opposes the taking of parkland in Van Cortlandt Park for the site of a water filtration plant. The 1.3 million people of the Bronx – and all New Yorkers - deserve their fair share of green and open space, which is essential for neighborhoods to thrive.

The taking of such a large section of one of the Bronx's most valued parks for non-parks use sets an unacceptable precedent.

Thank you.