

## **Mighty Waters Working Group**

### **Overview**

Governor Cuomo created the *Mighty Waters Working Group* in 2012, an inter-agency working group to promote economic development, community revitalization, environmental sustainability, and flood hazard risk reduction in the Mohawk River Valley. The multi-agency working group is being co-chaired by Secretary of State Cesar A. Peralas and Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens. The Working Group's efforts related to economic development and community revitalization are being coordinated by the Department of State, and those related to environmental sustainability and flood hazard risk reduction are being coordinated by the Department of Environmental Conservation. The efforts of the Working Group span counties of the Capital Region and Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Councils, and are intended to support Congressman Paul Tonko's *Mighty Waters Initiative* and complement the work of both Economic Development Councils.

### **Elements of the Working Group Strategy**

A key product of the Working Group will be a unified strategy which identifies priority projects and actions needed to promote the four core elements of the initiative – economic development; community revitalization; environmental sustainability; and flood hazard risk reduction. The strategy will also establish a pipeline of priority projects and actions needed to support the Capital Region and Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Councils. The Economic Development and Community Revitalization elements will identify priority projects and actions needed to revitalize and redevelop downtowns, waterfronts, and brownfield opportunity areas; enhance waterfront access and connectivity between communities; and strengthen the ability of communities to take advantage of heritage-related tourism opportunities for communities along the Mohawk River and its confluence with the Hudson River. It is anticipated that many of these projects have already been identified through existing State and community plans and programs, such as the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program and Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program.

The Environmental Sustainability and Flood Hazard Risk Reduction elements will identify current threats to water quality, fish and wildlife resources, and community vulnerability to flooding. Initially, these elements will be focused on the Mohawk River watershed. Priority actions will focus on assuring environmental protection and addressing flood risks to communities and infrastructure through administering grant programs, research, awareness education, and proper ecosystem management, among others. It is anticipated that future priorities will be identified through existing programs, such as the Mohawk River Basin