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PBA of NYS OFFERS TESTIMONY AT BUDGET HEARING ON PUBLIC PROTECTION

PBA President Manuel Vilar supports funding for staff and vital equipment.

Albany – The president of the PBA of New York State today will testify before the Joint Budget Hearing on the 2014-15 state budget. He will be asking lawmakers to support the Governor's efforts to adequately staff law enforcement agencies and to help replace old, unreliable vehicles as well as asking them to augment the Executive budget by offering additional resources for necessary equipment.

PBA of NYS President Manuel Vilar cited recent extreme weather, as well as officers' duty to respond to felonies, terrorist acts and conduct emergency rescues as justification to support recurring academy classes, deal with high attrition rates at the State University Police, to outfit response vehicles and upgrade communications system and purchase necessary gear.

The PBA of NYS represents state University Police, Environmental Conservation Police, Park Police, and state Forest Rangers.

"Over the past several years, we have been routinely asked to do more with less, and we have," Vilar said. "Deep cuts to our units have gotten us to the point where our officers are concerned with their ability to respond quickly to emergency calls."

Vilar urged the Legislature to prioritize the funding needs of all units so officers can better protect and serve residents, students and visitors.

Upwards of 60 million New York residents and visitors will come under the jurisdiction of the state's parks and forest preserves each year. Vilar asked that non-personnel budget lines be increased to purchase additional supplies and equipment.

"For example, while we recently graduated a new academy of Forest Rangers, the graduates did not receive winter coats, ATV helmets, gloves or flashlights," Vilar said "New Environmental Conservation Police Officers did not receive rain gear, and antiquated radio equipment makes it impossible to communicate with the State Police."

The PBA of New York State is the exclusive bargaining agent for the New York State (SUNY) University Police, the New York State Environmental Conservation Police, the New York State Park Police, and the New York State Forest Rangers. Our members police and protect New York State's public universities and colleges; state parks and historic sites; and they enforce state laws and protect our lands and forests and ensure environmental safety and quality throughout the state.