

## **NY State's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) Is Very Important to Community Gardens!**

The EPF was established by the legislature in 1995. The EPF Act created a dedicated fund supported by a portion of the Real Estate Transfer Fee (RETT). Since that time the EPF has spent more than \$1.3 Billion on parks, zoos, aquaria, botanic gardens, historic preservation, recycling, waterfront restoration projects and ... COMMUNITY GARDENING!

This year's State Budget (2011/2012) left the EPF untouched. That is not to say that we should be satisfied. In past years, anytime the State was short of funds, hundreds of millions of dollars were taken from the EPF to plug holes elsewhere, while other state agencies' budgets were left mostly in tact. Last year the EPF was cut dramatically to reduce a \$10 Billion dollar budget deficit.

This is the first year of the Cuomo administration budget. By statute the EPF was promised \$300 million but received only \$134 million – exactly the same as last year. The good news is that Governor Cuomo understands the importance of the EPF and we hope that in the future it will be fully funded.