New York State Conservation Council Inc.
8 East Main Street, Ilion, New York 13357-1899

MEMORANDUM OF CONCERN

Bill # **A 4515** Goodell No same as

Title: Relates to tax check-off boxes on personal income tax return forms; specifically, removing the Return a Gift to Wildlife line item.

Justification:

The NYSCC is concerned that removing the Return a Gift to Wildlife (RAGTW) item from the New York State Income Tax Return will have a severe impact on the revenue received through this program.

The RAGTW program was established in 1982 to help the support the DEC's fish and wildlife programs. Since its inception it has funded, totally or in part, over 250 projects. Currently, RAGTW generates approximately $450,000 each year from the tax return line. Since inception, these contributions have provided over $30 million to the Conservation Fund.

RAGTW is a different breed in that it is wholly a state program. Unlike the other donation lines, the RAGTW does not have private advocacy groups free to actively promote participation in the donation program. The sponsor, as such, is the DEC and they are not in the solicitation business.

This fund is also more efficient than the others in the management of dispersals. As it is managed entirely within the state administrative structure, validating and overseeing private recipients is not required.

The Council understands the issues being addressed by this legislation and the merits of the proposed changes. The unique structure of the RAGTW program, however, begs for a unique treatment.

Contact:

A. Charles Parker, President
NYS Conservation Council, Inc.
Phone: 315/963-8413
Email: nyscc@nyscc.com