

Dear Editor:

Although Senator Maziarz has been an opponent of total gorge parkway removal in the past, it's now time for him to step forward as a strong advocate of total Niagara gorge parkway removal. The five months he's been representing the City of Niagara Falls has been ample time for him to reevaluate the evidence, including the conclusions of the EDR study

His comments during the "2-On-Your-Side" special with Scott Brown indicated he's very much aware that he also represent the interests of Niagara Falls, New York. When asked what would prevent the same questions about the slow revitalization of the City being asked once again, five years from now, and producing the same responses, he challenged the viewers of the special to hold their elected representatives responsible for positive change: he specifically named himself, Senator Maziarz—and the City Council of Niagara Falls, and the Mayor.

As the Conservation Chair of the Niagara Heritage Partnership, I accept that challenge: I do hold the Senator responsible, as does the NHP organization, including the thousands of individuals who've signed the online petition for total removal, and the 80 plus groups and organizations also in favor of total removal. He should visit www.niagaraheritage.org to see the list of supporting organizations, if he hasn't done so previously.

Note: Years ago, the City Council of Niagara Falls passed a resolution calling for total removal; the Mayor, Paul Dyster, and members of his family, have also signed the online petition in favor of total removal. So these two mentioned by the Senator have already stepped up. We all await the Senator's support, as well, in the light of information provided below

Evidence provided by the EDR study and reason demonstrates total removal to be the lone rational choice. This, as common sense dictates, would be at least from downtown Niagara Falls north to the City Line at Devil's Hole State Park--and then a few thousand feet more to include the lanes over the Power Plant itself, so that a greenhouse in that location might be considered. (The actual concrete of the Power Plant parkway lanes would be left intact, and not removed, in any case.)

Stopping the removal at Findlay Drive, the option that Maziarz has been promoting, cannot be justified in terms of municipal boundaries, or environmental values--or the unsupported claims that this commuter route is crucial to the economic health of the northtowns. It's past time the Senator stopped feeding into irrational fears of "thousands" of additional vehicles

streaming through the DeVeaux neighborhood and of threats to the safety of school children, both of which concerns have been set aside by the traffic study of EDR and others. It is past time for him to stop implying the gorge parkway extends to Youngstown; it doesn't—we all know the gorge subsides at Lewiston and from there on the Niagara is merely a river with high banks.

It is time for him to recognize is that any "option," or "reconfiguration," of the gorge parkway that keeps lanes of a road running north beyond Findlay, including the one he's been supporting, maintains the detour around the business districts of Niagara Falls, especially Main Street, and does so at the expense of regional economic growth via ecotourism.

Retaining parkway lanes from Findlay north would be a continual reminder of the insult Robert Moses gave to us—(which Congressman Higgins has done such a good job of documenting).

We await the Senator's recognition of the significant role ecotourism could play on the Niagara Frontier as it relates to total gorge parkway removal. Ecotourism has been a major feature of the removal advocacy from the beginning--and has the potential to provide sustaining economic growth in our region. This creative envisioning of a new economic foundation for our region is supported by the conclusions of the EDR study.

It's now time for Senator Maziarz, as a leader, to endorse total removal of the gorge parkway and the restoration of natural landscapes, as proposed. Further details and rationale for the Niagara Heritage Partnership advocacy are provided at www.niagaraheritage.org, especially in the following, under Recent Postings: "Parkway Saga: Reason vs. Fear and Ignorance," "Total Gorge Parkway Removal: The Reasonable Choice," and "Ecotourism Best Way to Extend Tourism Season at Niagara.

Benefits of total removal:

- 1) Only total removal saves millions in reconstruction costs and pays for the removal over a short span of years by essentially eliminating maintenance expenses;
- 2) Only total removal can establish a wonderful gorge rim park with hiking and bicycle trails for residents and visitors;
- 3) Only total removal permits the Olmsted vision to be established along the gorge, while simultaneously creating the potential for a new population of

visitors to be invited to our region by direct marketing: regional economic growth via ecotourism for generations yet to come;

4) Only total removal eliminates the detour around the business districts of Niagara Falls.

Further, the potential of the greenhouse over the power plant parkway lanes should be intriguing to Senator Maziarz and others for its public and private possibilities. (There's over a mile of greenhouse possible, which need not all be utilized or constructed at once.) This could provide:

- 1) space for a State Botanical (or DEC, etc.) facility and the germination of genetic-authentic botanicals (as discussed by botanist Patricia M. Eckel) needed for genuine gorge rim restoration, and threatened species for elsewhere in the state--as well as functioning as a research facility.
- 2) space for schools and colleges with environmental and/or horticultural programs.
- 3) public/private potential for regional nurseries and landscaping firms.
- 4) rental space for special events—garden clubs, etc.
- 5) a roofed space for a trail-user restaurant.
- 6) potential for educational tours for elementary grades upward.
- 7) ongoing potential for media coverage that would be ongoing.
- 8) a tourist attraction!

This location is imperative for this—this would be a world famous retro-adaptation, a multi-use facility, and a further contribution of NYPA toward a green tomorrow. There's a potential for heat generated by the turbines (now released to the atmosphere) to be used, though the success of the project doesn't depend on it--the massive concrete of the structure would be a positive for heat retention. (Further, some believe, NHP among them, that the elimination of unrestricted vehicular traffic from crossing over the face of the power plant would also reduce forever a clear threat to homeland security.)

Further information that may be of interest is available
at www.niagaraheritage.org in:

Response to Greenhouse Critics.....(in Document Archives)
Bob Baxter's Niagara Greenhouse, by P.M. Eckel.....(in Document Archives)
Homeland Security at the NYPA Facility(Recent Postings)
Niagara County's Homeland Security Concerns(Recent Postings)

We look forward to hearing Senator Maziarz speak out about these issues.

Sincerely,
Bob Baxter
Conservation Chair
Niagara Heritage Partnership