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May 20, 2011

Legislator Maria R. Whyte  
286 Lafayette Ave.  
Buffalo, NY 14213

Dear Legislator Whyte,

Please find the enclosed letter to County Executive Chris Collins requesting \$200,000 for capital improvements at the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens. Our request is based on the May 12, 2011 approved resolution allocating \$300,000 for cultural organizations that can identify and match funds for a capital project.

Please contact me with any questions at 716.827.1584 ext. 202 or via email at dswarts@buffalogardens.com. Thank you.

Sincerely Yours,

David J. Swarts

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<b>President/CEO</b> David J. Swarts	<b>Chairman</b> Mary Ann Kresse	<b>Vice Chairman</b> Maria Lehman, P.E. FASCE	<b>Secretary</b> Claire Schen, Ph.D.	<b>Treasurer</b> Miche C. Needham, CPA
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May 20, 2011



Honorable Chris Collins  
Erie County Executive  
95 Franklin Street 16<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear County Executive Chris Collins,

On May 12, 2011, the Erie County Legislature, upon your request, approved a resolution allocating \$23,000,000 in County surplus funds to be directed toward a number of area capital projects. I understand that the resolution also allocated approximately \$300,000 for cultural organizations that can identify and match funds for a capital project.

As you are aware, the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens is owned by the County of Erie and by contractual agreement the County of Erie is responsible for capital improvements. The Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens Society, Inc. is responsible for the day-to-day operations.

As we discussed at our recent meeting, the Society is striving toward self sustainability and the positive momentum we have achieved, as evidenced by a variety of metrics, clearly indicates that we are well on the road to achieving that goal. The Society's Board of Directors is grateful for the commitment the County has made toward capital improvements, however in order for the Society to bring the conservatory to its full potential and implement its Master Plan continued capital investment by the County and the Society is necessary.

The historical significance and unique beauty of our tri-dome structure along with our plant collection and wonderful programs are the driving forces behind the growth in attendance and admission revenues. It is imperative that continued capital improvements be made thereby, providing a safe, educational environment that will accommodate the increasing numbers of County residents and tourists at the Gardens.

Since 2001, two of the three domes have been restored through a combination of foundation grants, Society efforts, and County funds. The third dome (greenhouse 3), and attached greenhouse 2 have not yet been restored but are in dire need of reconstruction. In the current state, great care must be taken to ensure the safety of our visitors from the crumbling foundation, corroded steel and possible falling glass resulting from high winds.

<b>President/CEO</b> David J. Swartz	<b>Chairman</b> Mary Ann Krass	<b>Vice Chairman</b> Maria Lehman, P.E. FASCE	<b>Secretary</b> Claire Schen, Ph.D.	<b>Treasurer</b> Miche C. Needham, CPA
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				Florence DeLeon-Grill Director Emerita

Some progress is being made however, and the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the capital project to repair foundations in greenhouses 2 and 3 is moving forward with actual construction work slated to begin this summer. Funds for this phase of the project result from action taken in May, 2010 with the adoption of a resolution by the Erie County Legislature authorizing the County Executive to accept and execute a \$200,000 matching grant from New York State's Office of Parks Recreation and Historical Preservation to make much needed improvements to greenhouses 2 and 3. The resolution also authorized the County Executive to accept \$200,000 in matching funds from the Society to begin construction to repair the foundations in greenhouses 2 and 3. Structural repairs which include vestibules, walkways and retaining walls will follow in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase. The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of this project involves the reconstruction of the actual glass dome in greenhouse 3.

The estimated cost to complete the 3 phase plan will be above \$2,000,000. As indicated in this letter, \$400,000 has already been identified for the 1<sup>st</sup> phase. I am writing therefore, to request that the County of Erie allocate \$200,000 of the funds approved by the County Legislature on May 12, 2011 toward the cost of the full restoration of greenhouses 2 and 3.

I believe we have identified a project worthy of consideration for funding. The Society committed matching funds of \$200,000 from its reserves and together with the \$200,000 from the New York State grant, \$400,000 is available for this project. Additional support from Erie County will have a significant impact on completing this important capital project.

Your favorable consideration of this request is greatly appreciated. I am available to discuss this further if necessary. Thank you.

Sincerely Yours,



David J. Swarts

cc: Legislator Barbara Miller-Williams  
Legislator John J. Mills  
Legislator Maria R. Whyte  
Legislator Daniel M. Kozub  
Legislator Timothy J. Whalen