

# Flanagan backs using cleanup funds in Kings Park study

BY STACEY ALTHERR

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State Sen. [John Flanagan](#) has agreed to support a plan to use a portion of the money he secured to clean up the old Kings Park Psychiatric Hospital grounds for an engineering study, but not without admonishing the Paterson administration for failing to assure the public that it will remain parkland.

In a letter dated Wednesday, Flanagan (R-East Northport) said he would support allocating \$3.6 million of the \$29 million to hire an environmental engineering firm to study cleaning up the property, which was transferred to Nissequogue River State Park on the last day of the Pataki administration in 2006.

"It is again troubling to hear that the Paterson administration still refuses to give assurances to me and the Kings Park community that this property will remain as state parkland in the future," read Flanagan's letter.

The property's future has not been clear since the hospital was closed in 1996. In 1999, then-Gov. George Pataki signed a law making 153 acres of the waterfront property into Nissequogue River State Park.

On the last working day of the Pataki administration in 2006, the rest of the 368-acre property was transferred to the state parks department.

It's time for a solid commitment to keep it parkland, even if it takes time because of the economy, said Linda Henninger, president of the Kings Park Neighbors Association.

"This is legitimate parkland, and it's going to take time for it to reach its potential," she said. "If they are able to take away [the property] as parkland, then no one's parks are safe."