

Cuomo says state 'poised for a grand resurgence'

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ALBANY — Stressing the state's economic recovery and a simultaneous need to help the poor, Gov. Mario M. Cuomo said New York is "poised for a grand resurgence," in his fourth State of the State speech yesterday.

Kicking off a session in which he, the attorney general, the state comptroller and all 211 members of the Assembly and Senate face re-election, Cuomo called for a \$1.4 billion bond issue to clean up hazardous waste.

Applause in the packed Assembly chamber seemed loudest when Cuomo called anew for state economic sanctions against South

African apartheid, a "work-not-welfare" job-help program and support for improving teacher salaries.

His audience combined the usual array of legislators, state officials, news media and retired politicians.

Many also reacted warmly to Cuomo's calls to "end the welfare hotel ripoff;" leave the western part of the state with cheap hydropower; consolidate state courts; help toxic chemical victims, and promote public ownership of electric generation, specifically on Long Island.

Citing the upcoming election campaigns, Cuomo said: "In all likelihood some of us will take too much credit and place too much blame. It is possible I will not be exempt from that temptation."

"But now, when we are still removed from the heat and rhetoric of campaigns, let it be recorded for the months ahead that the credit ... does not belong to

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the governor, nor to one party, but to all of us together."

GOP leaders, however, issued a response while the bespectacled Cuomo was halfway into his half-hour televised speech. A statement from Senate Finance Chairman John J. Marchi, R-Ward Hill, said Cuomo neglected to address calls for a new round of tax cuts.

Cuomo lauded continued plans for the second stage of a three-year tax cut plan begun last year. But he has resisted calls from the Republican Senate for removing sales tax on clothing under \$75, higher exemptions for children and school tax write-offs.

In a portion of the speech that resembled a political resume, Cuomo drew on familiar rhetoric: "A New York philosophy that binds common sense to compassion and shows government can have a head and a heart at the same time."

On that resume, he listed new drunken driving laws, a 21-year-old purchase age for liquor, the first seat belt law in the nation, the first program for the homeless, the first acid rain law and a road rebuilding program.

"At the same time," he said, "more help for our mentally ill and retarded: Those grown too old to help themselves, those not yet old enough."

Assemblyman Eric Vitaliano, D-Dongan Hills, dug quickly into the text of the longer, more detailed printed message to the state Legislature, issued annually

along with the delivery of the speech.

Vitaliano said a mention of the Howland Hook containerport on the Island's North Shore helped because Cuomo was "putting his credibility" behind the facility.

He called this recognition "important given the more or less gypsy nature of containerports."

Other local items Vitaliano cited as worthy of mention were Cuomo's call in the message for a special pool of state funds for the Staten Island Greenbelt and the governor's statements on garbage disposal.

The two-term assemblyman said Cuomo has "expanded on and recognized... strategic policy" he and other Assembly Democrats favor — promoting garbage-to-energy plants while ensuring they have safe emissions levels.

Vitaliano noted a recent poll in which lawmakers said they generally expect liability insurance and economic development issues to dominate the year's legislative agenda.

Other reaction from the Staten Island delegation was generally along partisan lines, but not completely.

Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly, D-West Brighton, gave a positive review, calling the speech "upbeat." However, she also favors the GOP proposal to remove state and city sales tax on clothing under \$75.

She also said "now is the right time" for several Cuomo program

proposals designed to promote job growth.

Assemblyman Robert A. Stranieri, R-Dongan Hills, found more to criticize. "From Staten Island's point of view, it's a lot of empty pages," he declared.

Stranieri said Cuomo was proposing to allow smaller counties to "opt out" of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority region but failing to help Staten Island commuters.

Cuomo policies on garbage-to-energy plants actually could slow up their construction in the city as a way to relieve the Fresh Kills landfill, and the governor failed to propose ways to cut interstate pollution, Stranieri said.