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Island

Cuomo's budget gets mixed reaction

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ADVANCE ALBANY BUREAU
ALBANY — Reaction to Gov. Mario M. Cuomo's new spending plan ranges from worry over state agency layoffs to praise for a proposed state aid boost of nearly 10 percent to New York City schools.

And Senate Republicans again blasted the second-term Democratic governor for rejecting new tax cuts beyond adjusting state changes.

Federal cutbacks threaten about 1,100 jobs in the state Labor Department funded through a special program. Cuomo seeks \$8.7 million to make up for part of the loss by creating 300 new jobs in the agency.

Assembly Mental Health Committee Chairwoman Elizabeth Connelly, D-West Brighton, called the Cuomo budget for the mentally retarded and developmentally disabled "very, very tight." She said she hopes the Legisla-

ture will replace funding to blunt the effects of staff reductions in facilities run by the state Office of the Mentally Retarded and Developmentally Disabled.

"I'm very concerned," she said, shortly after meeting with the office's director, Arthur Webb, here yesterday. Mrs. Connelly likened the prospects to 1983 when lawmakers used their budgetary power to offset sharp personnel cuts.

Long-term layoffs of 400 employees in the agency, and elimination of 639 jobs through attrition, would be partially offset by the creation of 555 different positions, according to the budget division.

Action in recent years to close the Staten Island Developmental Center reflects the coming situation statewide.

With the state moving to close large developmental centers, jobs are reduced, but in some cases workers accompany the state "clients" into their new, smaller residences.

The separate Office of Mental Health, which runs psychiatric centers, could also face some cuts. The final shape of the budget, however, will be determined in the coming weeks, under a fiscal

deadline of April 1. Senate Mental Hygiene Committee Chairman Nicholas Spano, R-Westchester, also expressed concern for staffing levels.

Figures from the city Board of Education, meanwhile, show the city's share of a major statewide education funding increase would total \$2.957 billion, up \$214 million from last year.

Bill Marcus, a lobbyist for the board, said the city school system has special needs that could be better met in the upcoming budget, including funds for pre-kindergarten programs, school buildings and English proficiency.

Assemblyman Eric Vitaliano, D-Dongan Hills, hailed Cuomo's call for more enforcement personnel in the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

Vitaliano termed the proposed increases "a response to the well-justified past criticism from both legislative houses for more enforcement activities."

Straining against these proposed actions was a continued call for tax cuts.

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that Gov. Cuomo's budget was dead on arrival in the Legislature," warned Senate Majority Leader Warren Anderson. "But I

will say that a budget of this magnitude without a significant cut in state taxes is simply not acceptable."

"Gov. Cuomo's \$40.9 billion budget proposal is noteworthy both for what it would do and for what it would not do," added Anderson. ally John Marchi, R-Staten Island, who chairs the Senate Finance Committee.

"One of the things it would do is raise state spending financed with state revenues by 7 percent. More than double the national rate of inflation," stated a release from Marchi's office.

"One of the things the proposed budget would not do is provide an authentic reduction in state taxes," he added, saying Cuomo's proposal for a spending cap "misses the point and ignores modern economic reality."