Statewide Ballot Proposition No. 1  
Clean Water, Clean Air and Clean Jobs Environmental Bond Act of 2022

This Election Day (November 8th) offers an opportunity for New Yorkers to put politics aside and vote for additional funding for water quality programs. The Clean Water, Clean Air and Clean Jobs Environmental Bond Act of 2022 also known as, Proposition No. 1, authorizes the State to raise funds through the issuance of debt not exceeding $4.2B. Proposition No.1 would authorize funding for important environmental projects as follows:

- Not less than $1.1B will be allocated for restoration and flood risk reduction
- Up to $650M will be allocated for open land conservation and recreation
- Up to $1.5B will be allocated for climate change mitigation
- Not less than $650M will be allocated for water quality and resilient infrastructure

Why is this important?

NYWEA’s mission is to serve the best interest of the public by promoting sustainable clean water quality management through science, education and training. To do this, we provide our members with opportunities to expand their knowledge and capabilities, and cultivate a forum to enable them to play a vital role in shaping an environmentally sound future. The restoration and flood risk reduction and water quality and resilient infrastructure components of Proposition No. 1 provide tremendous benefits to our shared mission of an environmentally sound future by having a direct impact on water quality. If Proposition 1 is approved, these two items are guaranteed to be fully funded.

When considering Proposition No. 1, it is important to note two other laws that impact the facilities and programs NYWEA members are involved in.

1. **The Community Risk and Resiliency Act (CRRA)**, enacted in 2014, requires that projects consider the future of physical climate risk due to sea level rise, storm surge and more intense rainfall that leads to localized flooding. The $1.1B allocated for restoration and flood risk reduction provides funding required to comply with the CRRA mandate.

2. The requirements of the **Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA)** could be satisfied using the $1.5B allocated in Proposition No. 1 for climate change mitigation. The CLCPA has three key strategies for wastewater utilities - **W.4 – WRRF Conversion, W.7 – Reduce Fugitive Emissions from WRRFs, and W.9 – Biogas Use**.

   A. **WRRF Conversion** – is to “transform treatment plants from a waste disposal priority to Wastewater Resource Recovery Facilities (WRRF) that emphasize the capture of beneficial products.” This strategy includes the following components: beneficial use of biogas and biosolids, optimization of anaerobic digestion, co-digestion where capacity allows, and continued research of co-pollutants such as emerging contaminants. This strategy mirrors a transition that has been underway in the wastewater industry for years and now has increased support from the state. From a greenhouse gas perspective, putting biosolids to beneficial uses and keeping them out of landfills will be one of the most impactful changes utilities can make; especially in light of the higher global warming potential of methane in the state’s accounting, avoiding methane emissions from landfills is a high priority for the state. Similarly, optimizing digestion to increase capacity creates an opportunity to divert even more organic waste from landfills, furthering the state’s emission reduction goals.
B. Reducing fugitive emissions from WRRFs is another goal that emerges from using a higher global warming potential coefficient for methane. Given the focus on anaerobic digestion as an emissions source, it is essential that utilities that use anaerobic digestion monitor their facilities for methane leaks to ensure as few fugitive emissions as possible. This monitoring will be a new responsibility for many utilities. Methane leak detection technology has been applied primarily to oilfields and pipelines; in the future, wastewater utilities will conduct similar surveys to identify leaks in their plants.

C. The requirement to minimize fugitive emissions from WRRFs is linked to a recommendation for biogas utilization. While biogas is excluded from the CLCPA’s definition of renewable energy systems, it is eligible to be counted as an offset project. The details of how such a mechanism or market for locally produced biogas have not been hammered out, but it will be critical for the state to identify a means to deliver renewable biogas to energy users who cannot replace fuel for heating.

The consideration of Proposition No. 1 requires the context of the mandates we all face together.

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Here’s how the language will appear on the ballot (likely on the back) – BE SURE TO SEE SIDE TWO OF THE BALLOT

“To address and combat the impact of climate change and damage to the environment, the ‘Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act of 2022’ authorizes the sale of state bonds up to four billion two hundred million dollars to fund environmental protection, natural restoration, resiliency, and clean energy projects. Shall the Environmental Bond Act of 2022 be approved?

A vote "yes" means you support it.