



# PROTECTING OUR WATER FROM SOURCE TO TAP

A Vision for Water Protection  
in New York State

2018









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# INTRODUCTION

## Overview

New York State is blessed with spectacular and vast water resources. The Great Lakes, Finger Lakes, Hudson River, five estuaries, NYC's reservoir system, Long Island's sole source aquifer, and other waters across the state are all critically important to our environment, health, and economy. Our surface and groundwater resources meet the drinking water needs of over 19 million New York residents, support billion dollar industries, provide abundant recreational opportunities, and hold the key to our quality of life.

Unfortunately, New York's treasured water resources are also under continuous stress. State and local agencies, water suppliers, wastewater treatment operators, and residents face a number of critical water challenges now and in the years ahead. Aging drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, legacy pollution from industries of the past, climate change, harmful algal blooms, and emerging contaminants are among the many challenges we face in protecting clean water.

The effort to keep our waters clean and safe becomes more challenging and more costly each year. Yet we must meet these critical clean water challenges, while ensuring that clean water is accessible and affordable for all New Yorkers.

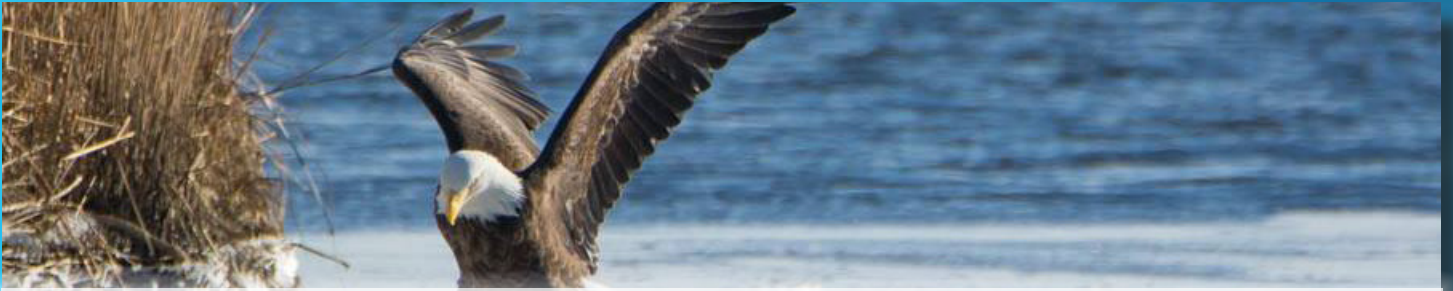
## Creating a Vision for the Future

To ensure that current and future generations can rely on abundant, clean, and affordable water resources in New York, a broad, diverse network of organizations convened in the Fall of 2017 to discuss water protection in New York State. The network includes water suppliers, wastewater treatment operators, local and state government agencies, environmental organizations, environmental justice organizations, and other water stakeholders.

This network of organizations has worked collaboratively to develop a menu of options for policies and actions at the federal, state, and local level which would help address New York's clean water needs now and in the years ahead. The solutions are primarily focused on issues related to wastewater infrastructure, drinking water infrastructure, and source water protection.

This suite of options is not meant to be exhaustive, nor an endorsement of every policy or action by all participating organizations. Rather, it is an educational tool that local, state, and federal government officials can use to explore options and solutions to our clean water needs.





# F E D E R A L

## Fund the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and Fund Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)

Support for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRFs), which communities depend on for low-interest or zero-interest loans to implement costly wastewater and drinking water infrastructure projects, is vital. Wastewater and drinking water infrastructure needs continue to increase, however federal funding for these critical programs has decreased in recent years. Doubling of the current funding levels for the SRF's more accurately reflects the water infrastructure needs across our nation, and is a critical ingredient in ensuring affordable financing.

In addition to providing increased funding for the SRF programs overall, it is critical that the CWSRF program continues to be structured in a way that provides New York State with its fair share of funding. Currently, the formula used to allocate CWSRF funding to the states provides New York State with the largest share (11%). New York State has the nation's largest need for wastewater infrastructure investment, and therefore this allotment reflects the true, demonstrated clean water infrastructure needs of our state and should be maintained as is.

Finally, Congress should increase the cap on the amount of State Revolving Fund assistance that states can distribute as grants. Under current law, states can only provide grants up to an amount that equals 30 percent of their annual federal SRF funding and they

are barred from providing more, even if they have the financial capacity to do so.

In some states, the cap effectively may keep SRF programs from deploying 100 percent of their available funds, whether by grants or loans; funds available for loans can go unclaimed when municipalities lack the credit to borrow even at SRF-subsidized interest rates. New York is one of twenty states that would benefit immediately if Congress would allow any state that contributes more than the minimum required amount of state money into its SRF to provide more SRF assistance in the form of grants.

## Reinvest in Source Water Protection

The 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act resulted in a national program to develop Source Water Assessments. Funding was never provided to put these assessments into use as actionable plans to protect public water supplies from new risks, and reduce or eliminate existing risks. New York's investment in Source Water Assessments (\$5 million in the FY2018 EPF) should be matched by new federal investments in Source Water Protection.



# F E D E R A L

## Maintain U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Capacity

For over 45 years, EPA has played an indispensable role in making our water safe to drink, our air clean to breathe, and our communities a safe places to live. EPA plays a critical role in the implementation and enforcement of landmark laws, including, but not limited to the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).

Despite EPA's importance, operating funds and staff have been declining over the last three years. Since 2012, EPA has shrunk in size from 18,000 to 15,000 employees hindering internal operations. Many EPA programs are currently underfunded relative to their historic levels, while the U.S. economy, our nation's population and the diversity of environmental challenges have grown. The President's proposed budget for FY2018 sought to further cripple the agency, proposing to cut the EPA budget by an additional 31%. Congress should reject cuts to the EPA, and instead, look for opportunities to restore EPA funding to historic levels.

## Maintain USDA – Rural Utilities Service (USDA-RUS) Capacity

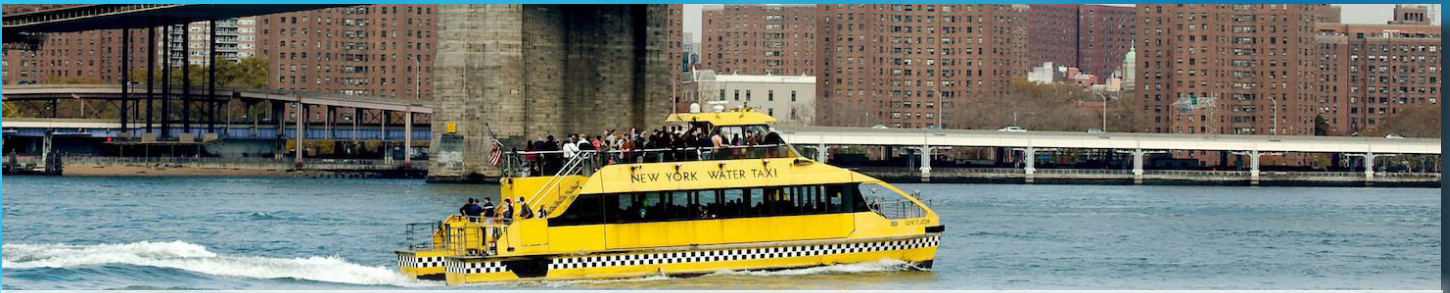
USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) administers programs that provide much-needed infrastructure or infrastructure improvements to rural communities. The Water and Environmental Programs (WEP) provides loans, grants and loan guarantees for drinking water, sanitary sewer, solid waste and storm drainage facilities in rural areas and cities and towns of 10,000 or less. Public bodies, non-profit organizations, and recognized Indian tribes may qualify for assistance.

WEP also makes grants to non-profit organizations to provide technical assistance and training to help rural communities with their water, wastewater, and solid waste problems. The President's proposed budget for FY2018 proposed to zero out the WEP, calling the program duplicative. Eliminating this program would put additional strain on the SRF's and deprive the small and rural water systems the technical assistance and affordable funding they so need. Congress should reject any proposed elimination of the WEP.

## Maintain and Expand Existing Watershed-Based Programs

Several watersheds in New York – the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Long Island Sound and Lake Champlain – benefit from federal funding for watershed-based programs. These programs should be fully funded and expanded to include a robust NY-NJ Harbor and Hudson River Estuary Program.





# F E D E R A L

## Research and Battle Harmful Algal Blooms

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) have been detected in over 60 bodies of water throughout New York State. HABs are damaging to aquatic life and ecosystems, and some are toxic, which threatens wildlife, pets, and human health. More research is needed to identify causes, solutions and prevention for HABs.

Proposed federal legislation known as the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 2017 would authorize \$22 million a year for 5 years (2019-2023) to help conduct research on harmful algal blooms and continue an interagency task force, comprised of key federal agencies, to advance the understanding of hypoxia and harmful algal blooms. Additionally, the bill requires the task force submit a scientific assessment to Congress at least every five years on harmful algal blooms in U.S. coastal waters and freshwater systems.

## Mandate Removal of 1,4-Dioxane from Everyday Products

1,4-Dioxane is a hidden carcinogen lurking in everyday products. Approximately 46% of personal care products, including detergents, dishwashing soaps, shampoos, cosmetics, deodorants, and body lotions, contain 1,4-dioxane. The EPA lists 1,4-dioxane as a probable human carcinogen and exposures have been linked to tumors of the liver, kidneys, gallbladder, nasal cavity, lung, skin, and breast. 1,4-Dioxane is polluting

water supplies, as conventional sewage and septic systems are not designed to remove 1,4-dioxane.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) can require manufacturers of consumer products to remove 1,4-dioxane from their products. In April of 2017, U.S. Senator Charles Schumer filed a petition with the FDA to require manufacturers to remove 1,4-dioxane, although the FDA has yet to take action.

## Update the EPA Clean Watershed Needs Survey

The EPA's Clean Watersheds Needs Survey (CWNS) is an assessment of capital investment needed nationwide for publicly-owned wastewater collection and treatment facilities to meet the water quality goals of the Clean Water Act. The CWNS hasn't been updated since 2012. The CWNS should be updated quickly in order to provide Congress with an up-to-date picture of water infrastructure needs nationwide.



# N Y S T A T E

## Build on New York's Historic Investment in Clean Water Infrastructure

The 2017-18 NYS budget included the Clean Water Infrastructure Act of 2017, which is investing \$2.5 billion in clean water protection (wastewater, drinking water, source water protection) over 5+ years. The holistic program will provide grants to fix failing sewage and drinking water infrastructure, upgrade and replace septic systems and cesspools, support inter-municipal infrastructure projects, remediate and mitigate contaminated drinking water, support land acquisition projects for source water protection, reduce water pollution caused by concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), replace lead drinking water service lines, upgrade IT systems (related to mapping technologies), and more. More communities will now be able to tackle their most pressing water infrastructure needs and protect drinking water quality and the environment. This significant investment will serve as a down-payment toward our state's massive wastewater and drinking water infrastructure needs, which are estimated at approximately \$80 billion over the next 20 years. NYS will need to identify additional resources to increase funding to meet these vast water infrastructure needs in the years to come.

## Increase NYS DEC Staff

In order to tackle our most pressing water pollution issues, it is imperative that the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) have the staffing to properly manage the programs that protect our ground and surface waters. While the Governor and legislature have made significant progress in providing funding for important programs to protect water quality, particularly through the Clean Water Infrastructure Act of 2017, we still rely on an underfunded and understaffed DEC to implement and enforce these programs on the ground. The DEC Division of Water has roughly 100 fewer staff today than 25 years ago, despite increased mandates and robust clean water challenges.





# N Y S T A T E

## Increase Staff at the NYS Department of Health

The New York State Department of Health (DOH) Bureau of Public Water Supply Protection has a vital role in protecting drinking water and public health. Sufficient funding is needed to support the existing regulatory framework under Part 5 of the State Sanitary Code to address the health effects and regulatory limits for emerging compounds such as 1,4-dioxane and prefluorinated compounds (PFOAs). It is important to note that when sufficient funding and resources have been provided in the past, the NYSDOH was successful in establishing clear regulatory guidance for past emerging contaminants including Methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE) and perchlorate.

## Establish a Statewide Community Preservation Fund (CPF) Program

A CPF is a dedicated perpetual environmental fund that can be used to preserve open space, as well as protect source water resources. A CPF can protect water by preserving land that recharges the quantity and quality of underground aquifers or reservoirs, protecting key ecological lands from development and thus reducing stormwater runoff, and safeguarding wetlands.

A CPF facilitates a completely voluntary program whereby landowners can sell their land or development rights from their land to the town at fair market value. It is funded by a onetime 2% real estate transfer tax that will only affect the buyers of houses over the median

housing cost for each town. Towns that choose to participate will have to create a community preservation project plan, pass local legislation, and hold a local voter referendum before the fund is created.

While the state has authorized the Hudson Valley and five towns on the east end of Long Island to adopt a CPF, most municipalities still do not have access to this important land and source water protection tool. Enacting legislation to authorize a statewide CPF program would give all municipalities the right to create a CPF to protect land and water resources across the state.

## Protect Water and Low Income Residents

Financing and funding options need to be explored to bring New York's water infrastructure into the 21st Century and satisfy the local match requirement for grants under New York State's Water Infrastructure Improvement Act (WIIA). A New York State water and sewer affordability program that provides assistance to low-income households – modeled after the State's energy affordability program – would help to ensure successful implementation of the recently adopted \$2.5 billion Clean Water Infrastructure Act of 2017 while helping to ensure that water and sewer services remain affordable for low-income New Yorkers. Additional state programs and planning should be devoted to this subject in order to incentivize local reform to ensure equitable water and sewer rates.



# N Y S T A T E

## Authorize Local Stormwater Utilities and Fees

Local governments need a steady source of local revenue to build and maintain stormwater infrastructure and run effective stormwater management programs. The Legislature can help by explicitly authorizing local governments to create stormwater utilities and stormwater fees. This approach charges property owners based on the amount of impervious surface on their land, or on some other surrogate for the volume of stormwater runoff released from the site. These charges are typically collected by stormwater utilities, which operate much like water and wastewater utilities that are also funded by user fees. As compared to reliance on property taxes to fund stormwater infrastructure, cities have found that a stormwater fee results in lower charges to residential customers. Further, this fee structure can incorporate financial incentives for property owners to minimize impervious surfaces or use green infrastructure to capture runoff. Local governments in New York are uncertain whether current state law authorizes them to use this approach; as a result, there is only one stormwater utility and stormwater fee in the entire state (in Ithaca). New state legislation would remove any doubt and empower more cities to adopt this approach.

## Update the Water Resources Management Strategy

NYS should re-convene its Statewide Water Resources Planning Council, and update its Water Resources Strategy as a vehicle for advancing a Reforming the Water Vision akin to Governor Andrew Cuomo's "Reforming the Energy Vision" initiative. This initiative would build on the work of the Water Quality Rapid Response Team and the Clean Water Infrastructure Act to advance proactive strategies for watershed protection, water conservation and equitable pricing. Many of the policies suggested in this document could be advanced through updating of this state strategy, which is authorized and required by existing state law (Article 15, Title 29).

## Allow for the Protection of "Natural Infrastructure" through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund

Following and learning from the example set by California with the signing of AB 2480 into law, establishing that "source watersheds are recognized and defined as integral components of California's water infrastructure." This law establishes mechanisms to finance investments in land conservation, stream restoration, and other components of maintaining, preserving and restoring natural landscapes that are critical to public water supplies.





# N Y S T A T E

## Test Drinking Water for All New Yorkers

In recent years, high profile cases of drinking water contamination in New York communities have highlighted the need to improve drinking water protection in the state. In particular, the drinking water supplies of millions of New Yorkers had not been tested for emerging, unregulated contaminants such as perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), 1,4-dioxane, and many others. This puts public health in New York at risk. The Emerging Contaminant Monitoring Act, created in the SFY2017-18 budget, addresses this problem by requiring that smaller public water systems, serving less than 10,000 people, be required to test for certain unregulated contaminants, to be determined by the NYS Department of Health. The legislation also creates a pathway for the NYS Department of Health to establish enforceable drinking water standards for emerging contaminants.

The NYS Department of Health will provide financial assistance for the testing to small public water systems that demonstrate financial hardship. There are approximately 2.5 million New York State residents served by these smaller public water systems. In addition, the New York State Drinking Water Quality Council was created in the SFY 2017-18 Budget to advise the state on emerging contaminant levels and testing.

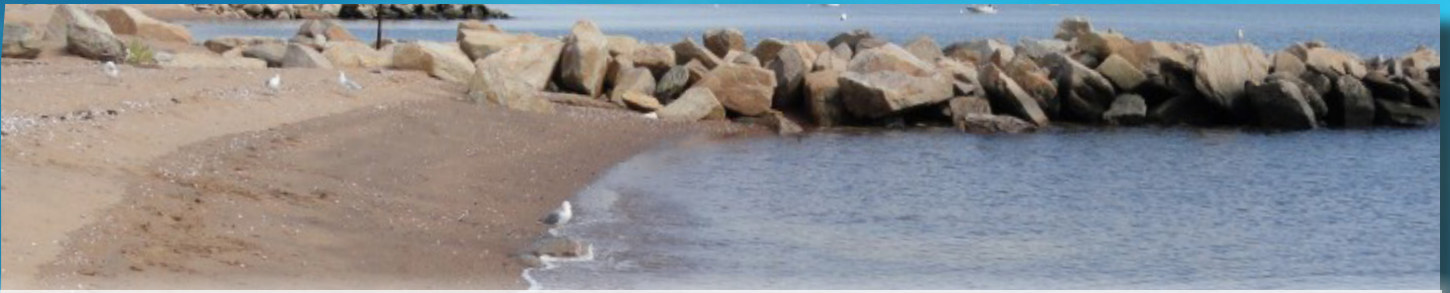
These pieces of legislation made major steps in the right direction; however, more work needs to be done to ensure that all New Yorkers have adequate testing of our drinking water supplies. In particular, there are no federal or state laws requiring testing of private wells.

There are 1.1 million private wells in New York State, serving nearly four million residents. Failure to test these wells for unregulated contaminants puts New Yorkers at risk.

## Promote Asset Management

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation should continue to invest in its pilot Asset Management Program, and the state should develop new carrots and sticks to promote asset management at the local level by wastewater, drinking water, and stormwater systems. Asset management ensures that inventories of needed investments are maintained and updated, and resources are allocated to allow for ongoing maintenance and repair of systems before they fail. New York should consider requiring all but the smallest systems to develop and adequately fund asset management programs.

Universal adoption of this approach would be an invaluable complement to the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act grant program. By prioritizing investments in, and optimizing operations and maintenance of, each utility's water and wastewater system, asset management would help ensure that the state taxpayer and local ratepayers get the most "bang for their buck."



# N Y S T A T E

## Set Enforceable Standards for PFOA and PFOS Levels in Drinking Water and Establish Clear, Effective Requirements for Public Notification When Contamination is Discovered

PFOA and PFOS contamination has become a serious public health crisis in New York and across the country. Blood serum concentrations of PFOA and PFOS have been found to be about ten times the national average in Hoosick Falls and elevated levels have been discovered in New Windsor, Fort Drum, Hempstead, Petersburg, Newburgh, Hampton Bays, Cambridge, and Yaphank, and likely occur in other communities across the state. PFOA and PFOS have been linked to profound adverse health effects, such as developmental effects in fetuses and infants, multiple types of cancer, and liver damage. They are extremely persistent and highly bioaccumulative. In the absence of federal safeguards, New York State must adopt stringent drinking water standards for PFOA and PFOS. Further, the State should establish clear, effective requirements for public notification when the PFOA/PFOS levels exceeding the health standard are detected.

## Protect New York's Wetlands

Independent of size, wetlands provide significant benefits to the people and the environment of New York State. Acting like filters, wetlands protect water supplies by absorbing pollutants, pesticides, nitrogen,

phosphorus and other contaminants. However, current law limits the NYSDEC to regulate and map wetlands of a size greater than 12.4 acres (5 hectares) or wetlands of “unusual local importance.” Independent of scientific and ecological value, the 12.4 acre size limitation was included in the Freshwater Wetlands Act of 1975. New York State can protect water quality by mapping and regulating all wetlands of one acre or larger, and giving discretion to the DEC Commissioner to protect wetlands less than one acre in size if they of “unusual local importance.” Further, where DEC is in possession of updated maps (e.g. the Wallkill River Watershed), the maps should be made public so that the most accurate and up to date information can be used to inform permitting decisions.

## Establish a Clean Water Communities Program

A Clean Water Communities program would encourage local implementation of watershed- and water-friendly practices, modeled after NYSEERDA's successful Clean Energy Communities Program. This program could, like the NYSEERDA program, identify “high-impact” local actions that support watershed management, water conservation and equitable pricing that would qualify municipalities for grant opportunities.





# N Y S T A T E

## Utilize “Design-Build” for Clean Water Infrastructure

Traditionally, municipalities have used the design-bid-build approach, which entails two contracts – one with an engineering firm to design the project, and one with a construction company to build it as designed. Design-build, on the other hand, entails only one contract, between the owner and the design-builder. Design-build offers time savings, cost savings, and higher quality through increased collaborations and innovations. Despite its potential benefits, design-build for water infrastructure is currently a limited option for public agencies in New York. Currently, 41 states, including California and Texas, have authorized broad use of design-build as a cost-saving technique. New York is one of only 9 states using design-build on a limited basis. Allowing broad use of design-build for clean water infrastructure projects will allow NYS to save money and tackle more clean water infrastructure projects in a timely manner.

## Establish a Safe Water Infrastructure Action Program

Similar to the current Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) program, “SWAP” would provide municipal governments with a reliable and consistent funding source to maintain and upgrade drinking, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure. Funding could also be used for municipalities to consolidate infrastructure. Providing ongoing funding to all local governments will allow

municipalities to more effectively maintain water systems, rather than paying higher environmental and economic costs of reacting to and fixing major water infrastructure failures.

## Develop a New Model “State of the Art” Water Resource Recovery and Drinking Water Treatment Facilities

New York State faces the twin challenges of a growing suite of water quality concerns, and a rapidly aging fleet of treatment plants, with at least one quarter of the existing New York State plants identified as operating beyond their useful life – as of 2008. This also presents an opportunity to redefine wastewater treatment as water resource recovery, utilizing new technologies that can holistically treat water not only for traditional regulated contaminants, but nutrients and emerging contaminants such as 1,4-dioxane, pharmaceuticals, and PFCs. For drinking water treatment plants, investments are needed to develop technologies such as Perchlorate Resin Removal Systems and Advanced Oxidation (AOP), which provide the potential to remove these harmful contaminants. Investments in R&D and implementation of new technologies are critical to meeting 21st Century water treatment needs.



## Provide Technical Support for Municipalities

Often, local governments lack the resources and expertise to be able to access state funds for clean water infrastructure, such as the funding offered through the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC). New York State can provide resources to help local governments with the technical support needed to access EFC funds. Furthermore, NYSEFC should ensure that all applications are user-friendly and easily allow municipalities to apply for funding and help ensure that all NYSEFC funding is utilized.

## Tax Cap Exemption for Water Infrastructure Programs

Since 2012, New York's local governments are subject to a 2% levy limitation (or the rate of inflation, whichever is lower) on property taxes. While the cap has slowed the growth of property tax levies, municipal officials have identified significant unintended consequences that have developed during the local implementation of the cap, including difficulty in paying for much needed upgrades to failing drinking and wastewater infrastructure. An exemption for wastewater and drinking water infrastructure would give local governments the ability to generate adequate revenue needed to upgrade drinking and wastewater infrastructure in their communities before the facility experiences a costly system failure.

Upgrading this infrastructure is critical to preventing systems from failing and putting the public health and

our environment at risk. This revision will allow critical drinking and clean water supply infrastructure to be upgraded and/or constructed without the consequences of exceeding the 2 percent tax cap. It should be noted that the 2% exclusion currently applies to school districts and not to any other local governments.

## Public Notification for Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

From May to October, the DEC HABs Notification Page provides information about the status of waterbodies with HABs. This information is collected through the DEC Lake Classification and Inventory (LCI) Program, Citizen Statewide Lake Assessment Program volunteers, partner HABs monitoring programs, and from public reports. DEC has done a laudable job in providing the public and press with timely and critical information on HABs. DEC has also worked hard to be on the forefront of this growing issue.

However, as HABs become more widespread it is increasingly more important to provide timely information to help avoid unnecessary public exposure to maximize the protection of public and pet health. DEC's efforts to provide information about HABs on the DEC website and through the weekly publication of Making Waves are important steps in the right direction. In addition, the DEC should develop a more robust notification system, similar to Sewage Pollution Right to Know.





# N Y S T A T E

## Clarify the NYS Superfund Law to Financially Protect Public Water Ratepayers

The Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Site (IHWDS) Program, created under the state Superfund Law, is the state’s program for identifying, investigating and cleaning up sites where consequential amounts of hazardous waste may exist. These sites go through a process of investigation, evaluation, cleanup and monitoring that has several distinct stages. Unfortunately, public groundwater suppliers cannot be reimbursed for wellhead treatment costs until a supply well has been impacted. Planning, design, regulatory approval and construction take considerable time (from at least one to two years).

Therefore, the planning and implementation process must begin immediately once a contamination threat is identified. Depending on the nature and magnitude of the contamination at any given site, wellhead treatment capital costs can range from \$2 million to \$4 million per well location. Financing large capital projects also takes time to obtain and is further complicated by the property tax cap. Therefore, obtaining reimbursement once a contamination threat is identified is critical and protective of the water ratepayer, who should not bear the cost of contamination cleanup.

## Require Annual Water Loss Audits

In an October 2017 report, the Office of the State Comptroller concluded that “[w]ater leaks, broken pipes and aging infrastructure are costing local governments millions of dollars annually,” and that some utilities may “lose” as much as 50 percent of the water they produce. In addition to physical damage to water systems—and to streets, homes, and businesses—water main breaks also pose risks of drinking water contamination, while chronic water losses threaten the sufficiency of water supplies in water-stressed regions or during times of drought. Yet, most utilities do not even know how much water they are losing, what the causes are in their systems, how costly these losses are, or how to prioritize investments, because they do not effectively audit their water losses.

Only the small number of utilities under the jurisdiction of the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) are required to perform and report the results of annual water loss audits using a standard methodology, developed by the American Water Works Association (AWWA), that reflects current best practice in the industry. New York should impose this requirement statewide, as many other states are now doing. Further, the state should require independent validation of the audits, post the validated audit results publicly, develop performance benchmarks for utilities to reduce water loss, and provide technical assistance to utilities regarding both the audit process and the implementation of strategies to reduce losses.



# NY STATE

## Update Water Efficiency Standards for Plumbing Fixtures

Water efficiency measures not only save water and help consumers shrink their water bills, they also help to reduce both capital and operating costs associated with drinking water and wastewater systems by helping to avoid, minimize, or defer the need for expanded conveyance, collection, and treatment capacity, and by reducing energy needs for pumping and treatment. One of the most important and cost-effective ways to reduce domestic water usage is to use more efficient plumbing fixtures. In 2017, New York required toilets, urinals, showerheads, and bathroom faucets in new construction to be at least as efficient as the specifications set by the U.S. EPA's WaterSense Program, a voluntary labeling program identifying efficient products similar to the Energy Star program. The state could go further, by adopting legislation to extend the new standards to all toilets, urinals, showerheads, and bathroom faucets.

## Update Watershed Rules and Regulations for Public Drinking Water Supplies

Watershed Rules and Regulations, under Public Health Law, promote the protection of public water supplies, and the watersheds that they rely on. These rules and regulations are the foundation of the world-renowned protections for New York City's drinking water supply. In most communities across NY State, these rules and regulations have not been updated in decades, and as a result, are not serving their purpose

to empower communities to protect their own drinking water supplies. Model rules and regulations should be developed and tailored to local conditions, and adopted in coordination with the state effort to update Source Water Assessments. Ensuring enforcement is also paramount to the success of rules and regulations for public drinking water supplies. Most water systems do not have the ability to enforce these regulations outside of their municipal boundaries. New York State should explore statewide regulations (tailored to local conditions) with enforcement from the state.

## Research Insurance Mechanisms to Promote Source Water Protection

New York State should research mechanisms to promote the right-sizing of insurance premiums associated with activities in source waters that can or do put them at risk of contamination, recognizing that when it comes to water quality, the costs of remediation far exceed the cost of prevention.





# LOCAL

## Utilize Tools Already Available to Local Governments

Communities can use an array of different existing source water protection methods to prevent contamination of drinking water supplies. Some management options involve regulations and ordinances, such as prohibiting or restricting land uses that could release contaminants in source water areas. Purchased land or conservation easements serve as a protection zone near drinking water sources. Public water systems are eligible for loans from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for this purpose. Public education can increase awareness of threats to drinking water sources, encourage voluntary source water protection, and build support for local initiatives. The first step in a public education effort is to notify businesses and households that they are in a source water protection area.

## Provide Additional Support for Water Resource Recovery Facilities and Drinking Water Treatment Plant Operators (DWTPO)

WRRF and DWTPO operators say that protecting public health and the environment is the most satisfying aspect of their job. Operators deserve recognition and adequate compensation for their hard work. New job training programs are needed to recruit talented people into the clean water field and ensure they have the skills to operate WRRFs and DWTPOs.

## Asset Management and Capital Planning

With or without state incentives, communities should adopt asset management strategies wastewater and drinking water systems. Asset management ensures that inventories of needed investments are maintained and updated, and resources are allocated to allow for ongoing maintenance and repair of systems before they fail.

## Local Financial Support

Water tends to be undervalued and underpriced with rates that generally do not reflect the true cost of the resource and the need for infrastructure investment and/or replacement. Water rate structures should be designed to promote water efficiency and investment in water infrastructure replacement. In most instances in New York, water is the smallest part of any utility bill. For many water systems, the monthly cost of water for the average residential homeowner is less than broadband internet service, despite the fact that water is vital to public health.

Full-cost pricing will not only help water utilities continue to provide customers with safe and clean water but will have the added benefit of encouraging more conservative use, ensuring a sustainable supply for future generations. Full-cost pricing would allow for the implementation of updated treatment technology that water treatment facilities urgently need. At the same time, rate structures must ensure equitable allocation of costs among ratepayers, so that low- and fixed-income residents are not unduly burdened by rising rates.



# OVERARCHING ISSUES

## What Was “Wastewater Treatment” is now “Water Resource Recovery”

New York State has 610 water resource recovery facilities (formerly referred to as wastewater treatment plants) serving over 15 million people. Water resource recovery facilities (WRRFs) receive the sewage we all produce and “recover” valuable resources from it, principally water. In addition to protecting public health and the environment, many WRRFs generate energy, extract and find uses for nutrients, use the treated effluent in beneficial ways, and innovate with technological and financial partners. It’s time we rethink what was waste as a resource.

## Educating the Public and Policymakers About the Value of Water

Water is life. Ensuring clean and abundant water supplies is essential for our health, environment, economy, and quality of life. Educating the public and policymakers about the true value of clean water will help ensure that all New Yorkers take responsibility for protecting clean water, and support the investments needed to protect and restore all of New York’s treasured water resources.

**CITIZENS  
CAMPAIGN**  
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



[www.citizenscampaign.org](http://www.citizenscampaign.org)

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**Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.**

**Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE)** was formed in 1985 by a small group of concerned citizens who recognized the need to provide public involvement to advance stronger environmental policy. Today, CCE has grown to an 80,000-member organization with offices in Farmingdale, NY, Albany, NY, Syracuse, NY, Buffalo, NY, and Hamden, CT. CCE continues to work to empower the public by providing members with opportunities to participate in the political process and thereby advance a strong environmental agenda.







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CHARLES STEWART

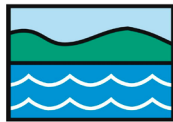
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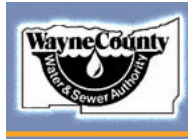
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