



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Antoine M. Thompson

## Senator Thompson Announces \$4.6 Million For Water Board Stimulus Funding for Clean Water Project

ANTOINE M THOMPSON June 6, 2009



**Niagara Falls, NY-** On June 5, 2009, NYS Senator Antoine M. Thompson (D-Parts of Erie & Niagara Counties) and Chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee held a press event to announce that stimulus funding in the amount of \$4.67 million will be released to the Niagara Falls Water Board. The total projected cost of this project is \$11 million; \$4.6 million will be coming from stimulus funds and the other \$6.3 will come from subsidized loans to complete the project. The press conference took place at the Niagara Falls Water Board site at 5815 Buffalo Avenue at 1:00 pm.

“As the Chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, this is an exciting announcement for me. I’m a big supporter of clean water and receiving this stimulus funding to repair the North Gorge Interceptor is great news for the City of Niagara Falls,” stated Thompson.

The North Gorge Interceptor is a 70 year-old unlined rock tunnel conveying wastewater to the Niagara Falls Water Board’s wastewater treatment facility. Over the past several decades the adjacent rock has been deteriorating, breaking off, and depositing within the tunnel. This has trapped sediment and debris within the enlarging tunnel cavity, located about 100 feet beneath the Robert Moses State Parkway, causing blockage and impeding the flow of wastewater resulting in surcharges in the upstream sections. The surcharging reduces the quantity of wet weather flow that can be intercepted and conveyed for treatment. The EFC stimulus funding grant will allow the NFWB to proceed with the project to remove the accumulated rock and debris, eliminating the surcharge and restoring the flow capability of the tunnel. This, in turn, increases the capture and treatment of wet weather flows, reducing overflow to the river.

The EFC stimulus funding will also permit the installation of a liner (solid pipe) within critical tunnel sections, preventing this same problem from reoccurring in the future and avoiding the significant costs of similar massive cleanout efforts.

This funding will support the removal of accumulated sediment and debris from and repair of the North Gorge Interceptor. This rock tunnel, built in 1937, conveys 53 million gallons of wastewater daily during dry weather. This cleaning and repair work will restore this tunnel back to its expected capacity.

“The federal stimulus dollars continue to make a positive impact here in Niagara Falls. The restoration of the Gorge Interceptor is important to maintaining a sound city water system,”

said Mayor Dyster. "The last time major work was done the expense fell almost entirely on the rate payers. Using stimulus funds and subsidized loans this time around, will ultimately reduce costs to the rate payers and that is all to the good," added Mayor Dyster.

"The announcement of \$11 million dollars in funding for the North Gorge Interceptor water treatment facility is great news for the City of Niagara Falls and the water authority," said Assemblywoman Francine DelMonte (D-Lewiston). "The federal stimulus dollars the city and county have received through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act are vital in our long term strategy of revitalizing the local economy and improving the infrastructure of the region."

"I want to thank Senator Thompson, Assemblywoman DelMonte and the EFC staff for their efforts in helping the water board obtain this significant grant for a project we simply would have not been able to complete without," said NFWB Chairman Michael McNally. "The EFC stimulus funding will allow us to perform critical infrastructure needs to the North Gorge Interceptor that will prevent obstruction problems in the tunnel from reoccurring in the future and result in millions in savings for our more than 19,000 ratepayers over the long-term."