



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

## Bonacic to Dep Commissioner Holloway: Come to Wawarsing (Now!)

JOHN J. BONACIC June 2, 2010

| ISSUE: **HOUSING**

State Senator John Bonacic (R/I/C - Mt. Hope), has requested that New York City DEP Commissioner Cas Holloway come to the Town of Wawarsing to meet with residents impacted by the DEP's leaking aqueducts.

"For too many years, the DEP has delayed acknowledging their responsibility. Now they admit they have ignored it, but still have yet to admit their responsibility. We are talking about people's lives here. The DEP Commissioner . . . Mayor Bloomberg, ought to come to Wawarsing, look these families in the eye, apologize for taking so long to admit the truth, and offer them just compensation. Anything else is just more of the same – a delay tactic," Senator Bonacic said.

Bonacic's representative attended a meeting of homeowners in Wawarsing last week where Bonacic's request was made to DEP official Ira Stern, that Holloway come to a meeting of the Wawarsing homeowners in the near future. Bonacic followed that request up with a letter to Holloway.

Earlier this year the State Senate unanimously passed legislation (S.6276) to authorize the use of \$4 million in State funding to buyout Wawarsing area families due to the ongoing seepage and leakage of the City's aqueducts. The funding comes from a \$15 million 2008 appropriation initiated by Bonacic to help flood victims who have been unable to sell their

homes due to ongoing flooding and water problems.

“New York City, not the State taxpayers, should be on the hook here. Their years of denials however, left us no choice but to act. This new admission, that they should have done more a long time ago is a step in the right direction, but does nothing in the long term to help these families. We need action, not just words to right the grievous wrongs foisted upon the people of Wawarsing by the DEP,” Bonacic said.

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Note: The text of the letter from Senator Bonacic to Commissioner Holloway is below.

June 2, 2010

Mr. Caswell Holloway

Commissioner

NYC Department of Environmental Protection

59-17 Junction Blvd.

13th Floor

Flushing, NY 11373

VIA FAX: 718 595 3525 AND U.S. MAIL

Dear Commissioner Holloway:

As you know when we met previously on this issue, the families who live near the City's leaking aqueduct in the Town of Wawarsing are in need of assistance. Prior to your administration, the DEP has ducked, dived, bobbed, and weaved to avoid admitting responsibility here for years, but the evidence speaks for itself.

The truthful admission by DEP staff that the DEP ignored the leaking aqueducts is welcome, but not enough to help these families. Action . . .and compensation is needed. Last week, my Counsel, at my request, asked Ira Stern of the DEP to convey to you my invitation for you to come to Wawarsing to meet with the impacted families. I now do so personally.

As you know the Senate has unanimously passed my legislation (S.6276 ) to reallocate remaining funds from a 2008 budget item I requested. The Ulster County Legislature has unanimously expressed support for that legislation. The remaining money is approximately \$4 million and still requires approval by the Assembly and Governor.

I also know you have met with County Executive Michael Hein, who has done an admirable job pleading his constituents' case.

That money, however, will not make these families whole. I am requesting you to come to Wawarsing and meet with these families face to face. Look them in the eye (bring the Mayor!). I firmly hope that if you come to Wawarsing, you will speak the truth and acknowledge that there is simply no way the City is not culpable here.

Bring the power of the City with you, combine City aid with State funding, and make these families financially whole for the devastating losses they have faced. Name the time and date and I'll find you an appropriate space in Wawarsing and we can try and move the process of just compensation forward, once and for all for these families.

I look forward to hearing from you on this important matter in the very near future.

Sincerely,

JOHN J. BONACIC

State Senator