



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

Senator Bonacic Announces Senate Passage of Sewage Spill Notification Legislation

JOHN J. BONACIC June 28, 2012

Sewage Pollution Right To Know Act Would Help Protect Public Health by Increasing Awareness of Water Conditions

Senator John J. Bonacic (R, C, I – Mount Hope) announced that the New York State Senate passed legislation that would increase the amount of information available to the public when discharges of untreated or partially treated sewage into the state’s waterways could affect public health.

The Sewage Pollution Right to Know Act S. 6268D, would require prompt notification of such sewage discharges so that the public has the information they need to make decisions about water based recreation like swimming, boating, and fishing.

“This legislation is designed to protect New York’s children and families as they enjoy the many recreational opportunities our state’s various bodies of water provide,” said Senator Bonacic. “When untreated sewage that could potentially affect their health is discharged into the waterways, they deserve to know immediately. Requiring prompt disclosure of sewage discharges will ensure that residents who could be affected are informed as quickly as possible.”

Discharges of untreated or partially treated sewage include contaminants and pollutants, pathogens, bacteria and toxins which can raise public health, safety and environmental concerns. Prompt notification of these discharge events would help the public have the information needed to limit recreational uses and activities so that people can be protected from potential exposure to contamination.

Publicly Owned Treatment Works or the operator of a publicly owned sewer system would be required to comply with expanded reporting requirements when a discharge occurs. When public health could be impacted, the legislation includes a public notification requirement that would be specified upon development of regulations by the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

This legislation also passed the Assembly and was sent to Governor Cuomo for consideration.

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