



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

State Senate Passes Avella's Bill Abolishing Unfair Minimum Water Charges

TONY AVELLA June 17, 2014

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The bill eliminates minimum water charges for New York City residents, ensuring homeowners are charged only for water used

(ALBANY, NY) Yesterday, the State Senate passed Senator Tony Avella's legislation (S.6154) which would eliminate the minimum charge for the supply of water collected by the New York City Water Board. This bill ensures that homeowners are charged only for the amount of water used, without any excess fees.

The bill will now have to be voted on by the State Assembly before being delivered to the Governor for his signature.

“The State Senate took a vote against an unjust fee which has placed a burden on the most vulnerable residents in the City of New York,” stated Senator Tony Avella. “This charge was never intended to serve as a revenue generating measure that it is today. The premise, at the time, was to encourage people to conserve water and only pay for the amount that they use. Unfortunately, throughout the years, the charge has become what appears to be a form of punishment – punishing senior citizens, single individuals, and those who frequently travel out of town for using less water than most others. I am therefore very glad that the State Senate recognized how nonsensical this practice has become in the City of New York, and passed this measure by an overwhelming majority.”

Mr. Kim Cody, President of the Greater Whitestone Taxpayer Civic Association, stated, “Speaking on behalf of the entire Association, we are very glad that this bill passes the Senate yesterday. We have a lot of seniors who are snow birds and are not in New York for half of the year. They do not use much water, but are charged for it every day. This is unjust. It is about time that our Legislators update the law to eliminate this unfair tax.”

Mr. Henry Euler, First Vice President of the Auburndale Improvement Association, stated, “ I applaud Senator Avella for introducing this legislation, and it is great that the Senate passed it. As I stated previously, Senator Avella’s bill will encourage more people to conserve water. Right now, people think that because they have to pay the minimum charge anyway, it doesn’t matter if they let the water run in the faucet or a hose in the garden. But if they are paying only for what they use, they will be more conscientious and conservative in their usage. Water is a precious commodity and with climate change, we don’t know whether we will be getting more or less rain and we need to conserve as much water as possible. Senator Avella’s legislation ensures just that.”

Senator Avella was also a Co-Sponsor of legislation authored by Senator Lanza (S.3599), which limits the New York City Water Board’s authority to increase water rates by no more than 5 percent annually. Senate Bill S.3599 also passed the State Senate yesterday.

“The New York City Water Board has been excessively raising water rates for decades. Although I am glad that this year, the rate only went up by 3.35 percent, there is no guarantee that next year, the rates will not be raised by double digits. This legislation ensures that the rates imposed on our water are capped, as they should be, to provide middle class families some much needed relief.”