



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Senator Griffo applauds new water quality protections, but urges proper funding to support testing

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO September 8, 2016

| ISSUE: **CLEAN WATER, WATER QUALITY, SCHOOL DRINKING WATER QUALITY, SAFE WATER**



State Senator Joseph Griffo on Wednesday applauded a series of actions taken this week that aim to ensure clean and safe drinking water for all New Yorkers.

“Water is the most valuable resource we have, and every community should expect that the water they drink is clean, no matter where they live,” said Senator Griffo, R-Rome. “But unfortunately we continue to discover that some communities are not receiving the quality

water they deserve. Our citizens expect their government to ensure safe drinking water, and so we must do everything we can to protect these vital water supplies.”

In a week that highlighted various issues concerning the state’s drinking water, Senator Griffo expressed his support for the following efforts to improve water quality:

**TESTING FOR LEAD IN SCHOOL WATER:** On Tuesday, Governor Cuomo signed into law a new measure passed this year in Albany with Senator Griffo’s support that will now require all schools in New York to periodically test their drinking water for lead. This will help protect children from being exposed to dangerous levels of lead in drinking water. Schools with water containing unacceptable amounts of lead will be eligible to receive additional financial assistance for the costs of testing and reversing the contamination.

**TESTING PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIES:** On Wednesday, Senator Griffo applauded Governor Cuomo for calling upon the federal government to require testing of all public water systems that serve smaller communities. Currently, a loophole in federal oversight exempts public water systems and private wells that serve less than 10,000 people – including businesses and schools – from being tested for unregulated water contaminants, like PFOA.

If the Environmental Protection Agency fails to overhaul this water monitoring system, Senator Griffo further said he would support potential state legislation to require the testing of all public water supplies, regardless of how many people the water system serves. A total of about 6.5 million people – 60 percent of residents outside New York City – are served by private wells and nearly 9,000 public water systems that do not require testing for unregulated contaminants.

**LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS:** The legislative hearings currently underway this week are a necessary and appropriate opportunity to examine the quality of water across New York

State, Senator Griffo said. As issues are identified, Senator Griffo urged the Administration and government agencies to work together toward the common goal of improving water quality in the affected communities.

**STATE FUNDING AND RESPONSIBILITY:** Earlier this year, Senator Griffo wrote a letter to the Cuomo Administration on Feb. 19 asking the Governor's Water Quality Rapid Response Team to investigate any possible water contamination that may have occurred as a result of state actions, particularly near salt sheds maintained by the State Department of Transportation. On Wednesday, Senator Griffo reaffirmed his belief that the State should provide proper funding and support to those communities where the state may have impacted water quality. One such community in Senator Griffo's district potentially affected by runoff from DOT salt sheds is the Town of Pitcairn, in St. Lawrence County.

And with schools now required to test drinking water for lead, as well as the possibility of any new mandates to require all public water supplies be tested for unregulated contaminants, Senator Griffo also made very clear that the state should provide any necessary funding to help communities comply with such testing.

"Whatever steps are taken to ensure that all communities across New York are guaranteed a safe water supply, these actions must not place any new financial burdens on schools and municipalities," Senator Griffo said. "Smaller municipalities should not be put in the difficult position of making tough budgetary choices in order to provide clean drinking water to all its citizens."

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2015-S8158

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Requires school districts and boards of cooperative educational services to conduct periodic testing of school potable water sources and systems to monitor for lead contamination in certain school buildi

June 17, 2016

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Thomas F. O'Mara**

Do you support this bill?

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