



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

## Gabreski Air National Guard Base Declared Superfund Site: Legislators Praise Quick Response of State and County

KENNETH P. LAVALLE September 15, 2016

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September 15, 2016 – Senator Ken LaValle, Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele, Jr. and Suffolk County Legislator Bridget Fleming praised New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s (NYSDEC) declaration of the Air National Guard Base located at the Francis S. Gabreski Airport as a Class 2 Superfund Site. NYSDEC has identified the United States Department of Defense as the potentially responsible party for perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) contamination detected in nearby groundwater supplies.

On April 25, 2016, NYSDEC added PFOS to the state's list of hazardous substances to utilize the State Superfund program. In July, NYSDEC identified the Air National Guard Base, including the former fire training area at the airport, as a potential Superfund site due to historic use of firefighting foam containing PFOS. NYSDEC immediately initiated an investigation and took groundwater and soil samples at the base, which confirmed that the site is a significant source of PFOS contamination in the area.

Also, in late July, Suffolk County collected samples of 66 private drinking water wells from Westhampton Beach and found several of them to be contaminated. The State has been working closely with Suffolk County and the Suffolk County Water Authority to ensure residents are fully informed, have access to bottled water, and are quickly connected to the municipal water supply.

In addition to an investigation of the Superfund site, the State has directed the U.S. Department of Defense to finance the connection of private wells to the municipal water supply that have been or may be impacted by contamination. If the DOD fails to do this, the state will use Superfund dollars to advance these connections and then seek cost recovery from the responsible party, in addition to providing impacted residents with clean drinking water.

Senator Ken LaValle said, "The Superfund designation at Gabreski Airport is critically important to begin to properly address the contamination in an expedited manner. The residents deserve to have every tool available utilized to clean up their water as soon as physically possible."

Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele, Jr. said, "This Superfund designation is a timely and significant step in the right direction. I applaud our government officials for acting so quickly to identify the scope of the problem, notify residents and now secure the funding necessary to

ensure these contaminated soils and waters are contained, removed and remediated.

Suffolk County Legislator Bridget Fleming noted, “Residents of our community must be able to count on access to clean drinking water. I am grateful for the care that government officials at all levels have taken in this instance to ensure that groundwater contamination is detected and remediated.”

All three Legislators are committed to ensuring that follow-up investigations occur, and that they are conducted in a manner which is open and transparent to all. Continued monitoring in this location will be critical to ensuring that any potential future issues are addressed immediately in an effort to protect the health and safety of the community.