



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Sens Squadron, Kaminsky, Brooks, Senate Dems Announce Legislation To Protect NY Water Quality, Unveil Senate Dem Policy Group Report On Water Quality Solutions

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Kaminsky and Brooks Joined by Senate Democratic Leadership to Unveil Water Quality Report and Bills

(Long Beach, NY) State Senator Todd Kaminsky was today joined by Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Democratic Policy Group Chair Daniel Squadron and Senator John Brooks to unveil a series of bills which will protect New York's water quality and protect New Yorkers' health. The legislation was introduced in connection with a report issued by the Senate Democratic Policy Group entitled, **Unpoisoning the Well: 7 Ways New York Can Better Protect Your Drinking Water** which detailed the threats to New York's water supply and families and made proposals to address them. Senator Kaminsky and his Democratic colleagues pledged to work with all state officials to pass these common sense initiatives and protect New Yorkers' health.

"In light of disturbing news about chemicals found in the water on Long Island and across New York State, governments needs to move aggressively," **Senator Todd Kaminsky** said. "We must ensure that our drinking water is safe and pristine, that our water infrastructure is upgraded, and that our aquifers are preserved. This is no time for passivity."

"Here on Long Island and across New York State our communities deserve the security of knowing that our water is safe and protected," **Senator John E. Brooks** said. "Water is a limited and precious resource, especially here on Long Island where water quality issues have been at tipping point for too long with inadequate action. We cannot afford to take any chances, which is why I am committed to crafting and supporting legislation that will protect our water supply, and ensure that Long Island, and all New Yorkers have access to safe, clean drinking water for generations to come."

"With the Trump Administration pledging to gut environmental protections, New York State officials have a responsibility to step up and take action and that is exactly what Senator Todd Kaminsky is doing," **Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. "I thank Policy Group Chair Senator Daniel Squadron and the entire Senate Democratic Policy Group for their comprehensive report detailing the water crisis our state is facing and ways to

confront it. Now is the time for bold leadership, and I commend Senators Kaminsky and Brooks for stepping up for Long Islanders and all New Yorkers.”

**Senate Democratic Policy Group Chair Daniel Squadron** said, “Water, water everywhere, but is there a safe drop to drink? Working with Senators Kaminsky and Brooks, the proposals outlined in our Policy Group report will go a long way to addressing concerns about New York's water safety, along with the Governor's important proposals. I look forward to working with the Senate Democratic Conference and the Governor to make them a reality.”

The Senate Democratic Policy Group report, **Unpoisoning the Well: 7 Ways New York Can Better Protect Your Drinking Water**, found that in the last two years alone drinking water supplies around New York State have been confirmed to be contaminated with PFOA and PFOS – persistent, toxic chemicals linked to cancer. Drinking water sources around the state have also tested positive for elevated levels of other likely carcinogens, including 1,4 dioxane and the “Erin Brockovich” chemical chromium-6. Long Island’s water supplies have shown particularly high levels of these chemicals, which New York does not specifically regulate in drinking water.

In addition to these toxic threats to the state water supply, the Senate Democratic Policy Group also found that New York’s water infrastructure is crumbling and in desperate need of investment and modernization. The American Society of Civil Engineers has graded New York a “D” for wastewater and a “C” for drinking water. These infrastructure issues are threatening New Yorkers’ health, as outdated and crumbling systems contribute to water contamination.

The Senate Democratic Policy Group report, **Unpoisoning the Well: 7 Ways New York Can Better Protect Your Drinking Water**, includes information on 7 threats facing New York’s water supplies and infrastructure and makes proposals to address them. These

include:

1. There is No Limit on PFOA, the Hoosick Falls Chemical, in New York's Drinking Water -- *Establish a New York State Drinking Water Limit for PFOA/S*
2. New York Needs to Aggressively Act On Other Likely Carcinogens That Are In Our Drinking Water -- *Protect New Yorkers from 1,4 Dioxane, Chromium-6 (the "Erin Brockovich" chemical), and Other Likely Carcinogens Present in Drinking Water*
3. New Yorkers Need Greater Protection From Contaminants Flagged By Other States and the EPA -- *Proactively Protect New Yorkers from Known Toxins*
4. One-Third of New Yorkers Are Drinking Water that Isn't Fully Tested -- *Test All Water Supplies; Not Just the Largest Ones and Make the Results Public*
5. With the EPA Under Threat, There's No Dedicated Water Safety Regulator or Meaningful Public Role in New York -- *Establish a State Agency with a "Citizen Voice" for Water Safety*
6. New York's Water Infrastructure is Crumbling and Localities Need Help -- *Provide Funding and Support for Localities' Water Infrastructure Projects*
7. More Tests Are Showing Lead in School Water, and Daycares Are Not Being Tested -- *Lead the Way on Protecting Kids from Lead*

You can read the full report and analysis here: <https://www.scribd.com/document/339432628/Unpoisoning-the-Well-7-Ways-New-York-Can-Better-Protect-Your-Drinking-Water>

To address the alarming facts detailed in the Senate Democratic Policy Group report, Senators Todd Kaminsky, John Brooks and their Senate Democratic colleagues introduced a series of bills. These measures include legislation that will:

- **Immediately Protect New Yorkers from Likely Carcinogen 1,4 Dioxane**– Senator Kaminsky
  - Recent testing has shown high levels of likely carcinogen 1,4 dioxane in 71% of water districts tested on Long Island compared to 7% of those tested nationally. Due to the cancer-causing potential of this chemical, multiple states have already taken steps to protect their residents from this toxin. Senator Kaminsky’s legislation would take steps to address this problem and set limits to protect drinking water.
- **Immediately Protect New Yorkers from Likely Carcinogen Chromium-6 (the “Erin Brockovich” chemical)** – Senator Brooks
  - The chemical that inspired the film Erin Brockovich, Chromium-6, has been found in water supplies in the water supplies throughout New York State, including Long Island, New York City, the Hudson Valley, Central and Western New York, the Southern Tier and the North Country.
  - Due to the harmful nature of this chemical, multiple states have already taken regulatory action to protect their residents from this toxin. Senator Brook’s proposal would take steps to address this problem and set limits to protect drinking water.
- **Establish a New York State Drinking Water Limit for PFOA/S** – Senator Breslin
  - Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) are persistent, toxic compounds linked to cancer that have been discovered in New York drinking water supplies in Suffolk County, Hoosick Falls, Petersburg, Berlin, and Newburgh. At least seven states have established state-level drinking water guidelines for PFOA and New York is not one of them.

- Although New York announced over a year ago that the state would perform a PFOA health risk analysis, that study needs to be expedited. This legislation will require New York to set a state-level PFOA/S drinking water limit, as in New Jersey whose proposed rule would provide its residents with the strongest protection in the nation against PFOA.

- **Proactively Protect New Yorkers from Known Contaminants** - Senator Hoylman

- Instead of waiting for evidence to pile up in other states, this legislation will mandate that the State Department of Health immediately review accepted lists of known, contaminants which present the greatest public health concern and inform the public what action New York is taking to protect residents from each toxin.

- **Test All Water Supplies; Not Just the Largest Ones And Make the Results Public** - Senator Hoylman

- New York should expand testing of wells and water systems beyond the limited testing required under federal rules that exempt small systems. Expanded testing should ensure review for known contaminants and newly covered systems should be provided with financial and technical support.
- As evidenced by the state's response to the Hoosick Falls contamination, New York needs to do more to ensure residents get accurate, timely information about the safety of their drinking water. New York should strengthen the timetable and means by which water safety information is provided to residents, including to ensure all impacted residents receive test results and provide state support to small localities to make accurate and timely notifications.

- **Provide Citizens With Clear and Enhanced Notification of Water Quality Problems** – Senator Dilan
  - While New York provides statewide and local water testing, results of these tests are not easily accessible to the public. In order to provide additional transparency, the Department of Health would be directed to post water quality test results on its website on an annual basis
  
- **Require Greater Transparency on Water Quality from Local Systems** – Senator Sanders
  - While local water systems are currently required to provide annual quality testing statements to their customers, these reports are rarely put on website for easy review. This legislation would address this problem by modernizing the reporting requirements and ensuring this information is posted on the websites of the local water system or the overlapping towns, villages, or cities.
  
- **Require State Department of Health Website to Post Quality of Local Water Pipes** – Senator Hoylman
  - This legislation would require the Department of Health to post easy-to-access notices on pipes and lead content which could contribute to water contamination and a public health crisis.
  
- **Extend Lead Pipe Testing to Day Care Facilities** – Senator Montgomery
  - While last year's first-in-the-nation law provided for lead testing in school water supplies, other states have highlighted that daycare facilities should also be tested. Expanding New York's school lead testing law to cover daycares and ensuring that tests conducted under these laws are performed properly will better protect New

York's children.

- In addition, as lead is discovered in more school facilities pursuant to newly required tests, localities will need assistance identifying the appropriate steps to take to remediate health threats and repair local water systems. Lansing, Michigan and Madison, Wisconsin's system-wide projects to replace all lead pipes, and other successful projects nationwide provide lessons that New York can follow in designing our response to water contamination. State experts are in the best position to help localities evaluate local threats and advise on successful approaches and lessons learned in other states.

For bill numbers and information about these Senate Democratic initiatives, please visit:

<https://www.scribd.com/document/339432948/SUMMARY-OF-LEGISLATIVE-INITIATIVES-TO-ADDRESS-WATER-QUALITY>

**Bill sponsor, Senator Neil Breslin** said, "There is nothing more important than ensuring the health and safety of our communities. At the forefront of this effort is having safe drinking water which is why I am sponsoring S.4386 which would direct the Commissioner of the Department of Health to conduct a comprehensive health review for PFCAs and PFCAs and to establish maximum contaminant levels for their presence in public supplies of potable water that is protective of public health. Safe water is a right, not a privilege and we must do all we can to ensure that it is free from any harmful contaminants."

**Bill Sponsor, Senator Martin Malave Dilan** said, "Every New Yorker should be able to easily determine if their water is safe. With so much information at our finger-tips, the idea that millions of New Yorkers are still in the dark about their water quality is simply unacceptable. My legislation would address this problem and ensure all New Yorkers have the information they need for peace of mind."



**Bill Sponsor, Senator Brad Hoylman** said, “One of the most basic duties of government is to ensure a clean and safe water supply. But from elevated lead levels in Harlem and the Bronx to PFOA contamination in Hoosick Falls and Petersburg, New Yorkers understandably have grave concerns about the quality of their drinking water. Rather than waiting to respond to the next crisis, Senate Democrats, under the able leadership of Andrea Stewart-Cousins, are acting proactively to protect the health and well-being of our constituents. The package we’re announcing today -- including my own bills to address unregulated chemicals, potentially hazardous lead pipes, and private wells – would provide New York the tools it needs to address water quality in a comprehensive way. I want to thank Senator Brooks and Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Ranking Member Kaminsky for their leadership on this issue as well as Senate Democratic Policy Group Chair Squadron for helping to produce this important and illuminating report.”

**Bill Sponsor, Senator Velmanette Montgomery** said, “Clean drinking water is an absolute necessity for the citizens of any developed nation. It is our responsibility to protect New York’s drinking supply and I completely support this legislative package to ensure our drinking water is safe for our families, especially our children.”

**Bill Sponsor, Senator James Sanders Jr.** said, “New York State has been a bastion for clean drinking water. Each day our watersheds deliver more than a billion gallon of water to New Yorkers. But recently, New York has fallen behind in bolstering critical, water infrastructure needs. Our water delivery system is antiquated and threatens our welfare and quality-of-life. Quality, drinking water is an indispensable resource; a resource that we cannot afford to lose. So I stand with the Senate Democratic Conference and its legislative initiatives aimed at unpoisoning the well and protecting New York’s drinking water.”

**Senate Democratic Deputy Leader, Senator Mike Gianaris** said, “Too many of our localities are facing public health threats due to water quality issues. Providing communities with proper

infrastructure to prevent this threat is critical to ensuring the protection of our children from harmful health consequences.”

**Senator Tim Kennedy** said, “It is simply inexcusable for any New Yorker to lack access to clean drinking water. We are the Empire State, and we have a basic responsibility to protect the natural resources which are essential to daily life and our economic strength. I'm proud to join my Senate Democratic colleagues to lead the way on this issue, and urge immediate action to protect the quality of our state's water and environment.”

**Senator Liz Krueger** said, “New Yorkers deserve to know that their drinking water is clean and healthy. Yet Congress and our own State Senate Majority Coalition are chomping at the bit to gut environmental protections that keep us safe. New Yorkers know better -- we know that it's important for government to implement smart policy to protect our families against dangerous chemicals and make long-term investments in our water infrastructure. I'm proud to stand with my colleagues in the Democratic Conference in laying out significant and immediate actions New York State can take to protect our vital water supply.”

**Senator George Latimer** said, “When there are dangerous level of harmful pollutants in the water, government is failing the people it exists to serve. I am proud of the work my colleagues and I did through the Senate Democratic Policy Group highlighting our state's water quality concerns and for the innovative bills which have been sponsored to address this situation. I will continue to stand up and fight so that every single New Yorker can rest assured that their water is clean and healthy.”

**Senator Roxanne Persaud** said, “Our drinking water is a precious resource and every effort must be made to preserve it. We must have safeguards in place to prevent a threat to public health and ensure that all New Yorkers have access to clean drinking water.”

**Senator Jose Serrano** said, “Clean water is a basic human right and if the Trump Administration follows through on pledges to gut our environmental protection agencies, then State government must step up to protect New Yorkers. As a member of the Senate Democratic Policy Group, I am especially proud of the work done by the group in uncovering the perilous state of New York's water infrastructure and quality, and for my colleagues taking bold steps to address these problems. Every New York resident deserves access to clean water, and the Senate Democrats will fight to ensure they receive it.”

**Senator Toby Ann Stavisky** said, “I want to thank my colleague Senator Todd Kaminsky and the Senate Democrats for leading the charge on this important issue. Access to clean drinking water is a right no New Yorker should be without. From the likely carcinogenic 1,4 Dioxane levels found in Long Island's drinking water to the Perfluorinated Compounds found in Newburgh, we must guarantee safe water for all. I am proud to support this legislative package, which restores the quality of New York’s drinking water.”

**Senator Kevin Parker** said, “Clean drinking water is in not a luxury, it is an absolute necessity. The solutions proposed by the Senate Democratic Policy Group will ensure we are doing all we can to protect all New Yorker's and working to create and maintain clean drinking water.”

**Senator Gustavo Rivera** said, “Access to safe and clean drinking water is a right that should be guaranteed to every New Yorker. As the Ranking Member of the Senate Health Committee, I am committed to working with my colleagues in the Senate Democratic Conference to push for these critical measures in an effort to protect our State's water supply and public health, especially now as we face the possible dismantling of environmental protections from the federal government.”

**Marcia Bystryn, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters** said, “With the myriad water crises going on around the state, enacting a comprehensive package of

solutions should be on the top of every legislator's priority list this session. We're pleased that the Senate Democrats have substantively added to the dialogue on this important issue. New Yorkers have the basic right and expectation that safe and clean water will come out of their taps, and that it won't make them sick. We look forward to working with the Governor and state legislators to evaluate any and all ideas that will lead to the strongest possible set of laws to protect our precious drinking water.”

**Paul J. Granger, Superintendent of the Port Washington Water District** said, “A reasonable timeframe for completing health effects studies on emerging contaminants must be undertaken by the state health department. This is important so that a practical maximum contaminant level (MCL) that is protective of public health and based on sound scientific data can be established. The promulgation of MCLs for emerging contaminants must provide a realistic timeframe for wellhead treatment design, funding, regulatory approval and implementation.”

**Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director, Citizens Campaign for the Environment** said, “These types of initiatives make us hopeful that this is the year of clean water. Clean drinking and surface waters are vital for public health, a healthy environment, and a thriving economy. We need our elected officials to work together and advance protections to drinking and surface waters this year. We can no longer wait, the problems are getting worse.”

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