



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

## Senator Murphy, elected officials call for water infrastructure funding to aid tapped out communities

TERRENCE MURPHY February 22, 2017

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YORKTOWN, NY – Numbers don't lie. In order to comply with one of New York's largest unfunded mandates, municipalities across the Hudson Valley are grappling with the prospect of a 40% tax hike over the next five years. Its an increase officials say will be hard to explain other than cleaning the drinking water for New York City's residents.

Knowing our future rests in taking care of our environment, Senator Terrence Murphy recently authored the New York State Water Infrastructure Relief Act. The act includes a maximum award of \$10 million per year to support a qualifying municipality's project. The State will cover 80% of qualified projects, excluding emergencies. To cover urgent situations, the act includes language establishing a process that requires the approval or denial of an emergency application within 48 hours and funding within 72.

Senator Murphy also announced his support of the \$5,000,000,000 Clean Water Bond Act of 2017, which, if enacted, will improve water quality and also upgrade the 40th Senate District's stormwater and wastewater infrastructure. The bond act will allow communities in the Hudson Valley access to funds to ensure critically needed infrastructure projects are financed. Because it is a bond act, voters will have a voice how the projects move forward.

"There are two things you cannot live without: oxygen and water," Senator Murphy said. "But the reality is contamination and the quality of our drinking water is a major concern to residents in the Hudson Valley. We have a comparable larger issue with stormwater and wastewater in the 40th Senate District. We have an obligation as public servants to protect the long-term health of our residents. Together, the New York State Water Infrastructure Relief Act and the Clean Water Bond Act will provide the financial assistance our communities need to face the environmental concerns in our region."

"Contamination is something we have struggled with in Putnam County," said Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell. "Many of our constituents' wells have been contaminated by roadway salt. So this is a problem that is very important to all of us. I would like to thank Senator Murphy and his colleagues for addressing the issue of clean water, and for allowing us to vote as a referendum to secure funding that will ease the burden on our local budgets."

Somers Town Supervisor Rick Morrissey, who also serves as Chairman of the Northern Watershed Committee, spoke about the municipal separate stormwater sewer system (MS4) mandate, which forces municipalities in the East of Hudson watershed to prevent pollution of New York City's drinking water. The mandate will increase local taxes, which already stand at an unbearable level.

"It is more important than ever that we are able to provide clean water to residents and to surrounding communities, including New York City," he said.

"We had an important meeting today with the members of the Northern Watershed Committee to talk about the MS4 unfunded mandates coming from the Department of Environmental Conservation," Morrissey said. "We would need to spend about eight percent of our budgets to comply with the new regulations, and that will put us well over the tax cap. So it is welcome news to hear about five billion dollars being designated through this bond act to help local communities."

North Salem Town Supervisor Warren Lucas, who is also a member of the executive board of the East Hudson Watershed Corporation said, "The leadership Senator Murphy has shown in moving these bills forward has been phenomenal. A group of us with sewer issues including representatives from Lewisboro, Somers, and Yorktown recently met with the Environmental Facilities Corporation to discuss our sewer system issues, which is a \$103 million dollar problem. The funds from these bills will go a long way in rectifying our infrastructure problems as long as the parameters are fair to all the communities."

John Ravitz, who serves as Executive Vice President for the Westchester Business Council and as the Chairman of the Westchester League of Conservation Voters commented, "We endorsed Senator Murphy for his reelection campaign because he is a leader who thinks outside of the box. He always puts his constituents and the community first. What I like about this bond act is it is transparent. The community will have the opportunity to take

part in this. From the standpoint of the Business Council, this will help attract more business to the area. We need to be able to show that our water infrastructure is strong, which sends the message that Westchester and the Hudson Valley area is open for business.”