



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

## Helming Touts Senate's \$8 Billion Water Enhancement Initiative

PAMELA HELMING March 16, 2017

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Senator Pam Helming (R,C,I-54<sup>th</sup> District) joined her Senate Republican colleagues in unveiling a key part of their 2017-18 State Budget proposal to ensure all New Yorkers have access to clean, safe drinking water by addressing extensive water quality issues and infrastructure needs. The plan provides a record commitment of nearly \$8 billion - highlighted by a new \$5 billion Clean Water Bond Act and the creation of a new Drinking Water Quality Institute – to drastically improve drinking water safety and water infrastructure so that public health is protected.

“Clean water is our most valuable resource -- and no service is more important than providing access to clean, safe and reliable drinking water to all New Yorkers,” said Senator Helming. “This record funding commitment would help protect our most important commodity and make urgently needed upgrades to the system that delivers it; ensuring a healthier, cleaner and more enjoyable New York for generations to come.”

Senator Helming noted that two of the Senate Republicans’ central budget water quality proposals – the \$5 billion Bond Act and new Drinking Water Quality Institute – were among the recommendations of a report prepared by the Senate’s Health and Environmental Conservation committees earlier this year. The report was developed from input provided at hearings held by the committees last summer and fall where government officials, experts, and residents provided the Senate and Assembly with a comprehensive understanding of the widespread water quality issues facing communities. Reports estimate that approximately \$80 billion over 20 years would be required to adequately upgrade the state’s water infrastructure.

“For the communities I represent, clean water isn’t just the foundation of life, it is the foundation of our livelihoods,” said Senator Helming. “These proposals will help to protect our lakes, which are the heart and soul of our region.”

The **Senate Majority's Clean Water Initiative** includes the following proposals:

- **Creation of a New \$5 Billion Clean Water Bond Act** to help begin making real progress in addressing the state’s ongoing infrastructure crisis.
- **Support for the Proposed \$2 Billion for Clean Water Infrastructure** to help immediately begin funding necessary improvements that meet the varying needs of communities throughout the state.

- **Establishment of a New Drinking Water Quality Institute**, which would be charged with setting New York-specific standards for unregulated contaminants that are at least as stringent as federal health advisories; developing a list of contaminants for which testing is required by public water suppliers; and establishing a clear notification process for municipalities, state agencies, and the public.
- **Creation of the Emerging Contamination Monitoring Act** to help clear up potential confusion about unregulated contaminants by requiring the state Department of Health to adopt any contaminant threshold level recommended by the Drinking Water Quality Institute or, where no such recommendation exists, the federal threshold.
- **Support for \$300 Million Environmental Protection Funding** to help protect water resources through the preservation of open spaces and upgrading sewage treatment plants, among many other environmental initiatives.
- **Continued Funding for the Water Quality Infrastructure Investment Program** for the replacement and repair of existing wastewater infrastructure and drinking water infrastructure.
- **Continued Funding for Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds** for state-administered programs that continue providing low-cost financing and grants for the construction of water system projects and drinking water improvements in disadvantaged communities.

“As a representative of the Finger Lakes region, I proudly support this bold plan to greatly enhance environmental protections and improve the state's clean water infrastructure,” said Senator Helming.