



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

Senator Helming Delivers \$1.1 Million in Grants to Replace Septic Systems in the Wayne-Finger Lakes Region

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| ISSUE: **CLEAN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE ACT**

GENEVA, NY – Senator Pam Helming today announced \$1.1 million in funding to improve water quality through the replacement of aging septic systems in communities across the Wayne-Finger Lakes region. Senator Helming fought for this funding in last year’s New York State Budget and worked aggressively to ensure that the counties she represents would be eligible.

“The Septic Tank Rebate Program will give local communities an important tool they need to protect water quality and keep our lakes clean. Our pristine lakes provide drinking water for hundreds of thousands of people. They attract many visitors to our local communities and are a driver of economic development and job creation in our region.” **Senator Helming** said.

“Failing septic tanks not only threaten our drinking water, but also contribute to harmful algal blooms, and hurt recreational opportunities in the Finger Lakes. As the State Senator representing the beautiful Wayne-Finger Lakes region, I am proud to announce that the six counties I represent will be included in the New York’s Septic Rebate Program.”

Ontario County Administrator Mary Krause said, “We want to thank Senator Helming for her efforts in obtaining funding for this program. This program addresses critical needs on 5 lakes in Ontario County. It will provide tremendous benefit to individual homeowners by

protecting water quality while helping to preserve these lakes for all of us to enjoy.”

Seneca County Manager John Sheppard said, “Seneca County is grateful for being named a Participating County to the state septic system replacement program. Senator Helming worked hard to make \$225,000 accessible for our program. These funds will contribute greatly to the repair and replacement of failed septic systems impacting both Seneca and Cayuga Lakes.”

Chairman of the Wayne County Board of Supervisors said, “Lake Ontario is not only the main source of drinking water for all of Wayne County but it also supports a world class fishing environment. It is crucial to our local economy and the health of our residents that Lake Ontario’s waters remain clean for current populations and all generations to come. By offering our residents an affordable way to upgrade their septic systems, we are doing the responsible thing as good stewards of our environment, to ensure the quality of Lake Ontario’s waters. I want to thank Senator Helming very much for her diligence in securing this much needed funding.”

Tompkins County Legislator Mike Sigler said, “What to do with sewage never has much fanfare attached to it, but it’s one of the most critical infrastructure improvements that can be undertaken. Pam Helming recognizes that getting rid of waste will not always be addressed by large municipal sewer projects and that many times, particularly for our rural communities, the burden will land on the individual homeowner. This legislation gives them a leg up in paying the costs that otherwise might be unaffordable, leaving these folks with ill functioning septic systems that hurt the homeowner and their family and the surrounding environment. This program is designed for them.”

“When septic systems fail, they leak untreated sewage into the environment, contaminating adjacent groundwater and surface waters. This is especially problematic in the Finger Lakes,

which provides not only drinking water for our residents and businesses, but are also critical to our tourism economy,” said **Cayuga County Administrator J. Justin Woods**. “We appreciate Senator Helming’s leadership on this issue in the Legislature.”

A list of funding allocations and priority waterbodies within the six counties are below:

- **Cayuga:** Cayuga, Owasco, and Skaneateles - \$225,000
- **Monroe:** Irondequoit Bay and minor tributaries to Irondequoit Bay, Mill Creek and tributaries, and Shipbuilder Creek and tributaries - \$150,000
- **Ontario:** Canadice, Canandaigua, Hemlock, Honeoye and Seneca Lakes - \$225,000
- **Seneca:** Seneca and Cayuga Lakes - \$225,000
- **Tompkins:** Cayuga Lake - \$150,000
- **Wayne:** Lake Ontario, Blind Sodus Bay - \$150,000

In the Wayne-Finger Lakes region, septic systems that are failing or likely to fail, and are located near priority waterbodies are eligible to participate in the program. Through this program, the state will provide funds to counties to reimburse eligible property owners for a portion of the cost of replacing failing septic systems and installing more environmentally effective systems. Eligible property owners can be reimbursed up to 50 percent of eligible costs up to \$10,000. Seasonal or secondary homes are not eligible for this program. For additional information, please contact your county Soil and Water Conservation District.

Participating counties will determine the eligibility of projects. The participating county determines the project’s grant award based on the program criteria and the property’s

location in relation to a body of water, impacts to groundwater used as drinking water, and the condition of the property owner's current septic system. This funding is being targeted to geographic areas within participating counties that contain groundwater supplies and surface water drinking water supplies and other threatened or impaired surface waters where septic systems and cesspools are known or suspected to be adversely impacting the body of water.

Senator Helming represents the 54th Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, please visit Senator Helming's [website](#), or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook or Twitter.

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