



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John E. Brooks

## Senator Brooks, Leg. Richberg, Officials Urge Congress to Fund and Extend Deadlines on Suffolk Sewer Projects

JOHN E. BROOKS October 10, 2020

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Nearly 70% of Suffolk County is not sewered, and many homes are still using aging cesspools and septic systems. Residents in communities across Suffolk have been waiting nearly 50 years to be connected to sewers, and help is needed from Congress to push these various voter-approved, large-scale sewer projects over the finish line.

“Suffolk County is home to over 1.5 million people and covers more than 600,000 acres. One of the great benefits to living here in Suffolk is that we have access to scenic, pristine waterways like Belmont Lake, the Great South Bay, our North and South Shore beaches, lakes and rivers. The health of our waterways affects our groundwater, which is our only source of drinking water,” said Legislator Richberg. “Over the past few years, we’ve seen more and more reports of nitrogen and other contaminants in our waterways. The inconvenient fact is that the state of these waterways is directly tied to our wastewater management. Expansion of Suffolk County’s sewage infrastructure is essential to preserving our environment, providing our communities with job opportunities and keeping our drinking water safe. The lack of sewers is damaging to our environment, our aquifer and our economy.”

After Superstorm Sandy, through a bi-partisan effort, elected officials were able to secure Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funding through the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) that were essential to making the historic undertaking of recovering from Sandy possible. Sewer projects were planned to address storm impacts and reduce nitrogen and pathogen pollution in our waterways, and public votes were held to gauge community interest. These voter-approved, large-scale sewer projects are now “shovel ready” to connect nearly 6,000 homes to sewers, including our vulnerable south shore and along river corridors in the towns of Babylon, Islip and Brookhaven. However, with the COVID crisis impacting every aspect of our lives, the projects have slowed to a crawl, and many are in danger of losing their funding.

**“Together we call for funding for infrastructure projects at the state and local level in any upcoming federal COVID recovery bill. New York State and local municipal governments are hurting as a result of the global pandemic’s impact on our economy,” said New York State Senator John Brooks. “It is essential that we do not let current infrastructure projects, such as the Carlls River Sewer Project, pass critical deadlines and halt due to a lack of federal support. Projects like this keep our**

**communities safer and more resilient using the latest developments in relevant science and technology. For these reasons, I urge the federal government to allot specific funding for infrastructure projects as part of upcoming COVID relief efforts.”**

“Long Island prides itself on its pristine waterways and clean drinking water, but the future viability of these natural resources are contingent on us taking active measures to protect and improve their quality,” said NYS Assemblywoman Kimberly Jean-Pierre. “With budget cuts threatening critical infrastructure projects like the expansion of our sewer system and other steps to enhance our environment, it is more important than ever for the federal government to include funding for these essential needs to help protect Long Island’s quality of life for generations to come.”