



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

Statement by Senator John Bonacic

JOHN J. BONACIC September 7, 2011

On NYC DEP Water Release Protocol

This morning's report in the *Daily Freeman* that the City of New York was first waiting for Ulster County's request, before making water releases was alarming and absurd. We need to know who is in charge of the reservoirs. The City's further effort to blame the DEC was equally troubling.

The reservoirs are owned by New York City. If they cannot maintain their property safely, then they should turn their management over to someone else. However, at this point the City was trying to "have it both ways" – claiming they had no responsibility for the property they own, yet still benefit from the reservoirs.

For that reason, today I convened a conference call with Ulster County Executive Michael Hein, Hurley Town Supervisor Gary Bellows, and the DEP's Deputy Commissioner, Paul Rush. I later then spoke with the new DEP Commissioner, Carter Strickland.

Commissioner Strickland confirmed to me that the DEP does not have to wait for Ulster County to say something, before the DEP releases water. The notion that they did, as stated yesterday by the DEP, and as reported today, is ridiculous.

Moreover, the implication that the release of clean water in a pre-flood situation is analogous to releasing dirty water at another time, is irresponsible. The reservoirs are not always at fault for flooding. However, we always need to know who is responsible for their management. The answer to that question, is the City of New York. It is not Ulster County and not the DEC. I will not tolerate the DEP trying to "pass the buck" again onto my constituents for their reservoirs.

Since 2006, the DEP has taken many positive steps in relation to reservoir management thanks to Mayor Bloomberg and DEP Deputy Commissioner Paul Rush. Commissioner Strickland is new on the job. I trust he fully understands that our region will stand together and insist on accountability for the way the DEP manages the nearly ½ trillion gallons of water that they have custody of in our District. I also trust that the DEP will not again try to blame Ulster County or someone else for the DEP's management decisions.

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