



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## A Step Towards Progress: Following DEC Decision, Kennedy Brings Cheektowaga & State Back to the Discussion Table; Town Agrees to Follow State Sewer Plan

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY November 2, 2015

| ISSUE: **POLLUTION, WATER, SEWERS, ENVIRONMENT**

*Weeks After DEC Rejects Cheektowaga Sewer Plan, Kennedy Holds Meeting to Discuss Differences and Reach a Solution*

*Town Officials Agree to Move Forward with Infiltration and Inflow Remediation, Stand Ready to Work with DEC to Meet Cleanup Deadlines*

CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y. –Following disapproval of the Town of Cheektowaga’s plan to build a relief sewer to alleviate combined sewer overflows by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) held a high-level meeting Friday between the DEC, the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) and the Town of Cheektowaga to find a solution to the town’s longstanding combined sewer overflow problem. During that meeting, the Town agreed to follow the DEC’s preferred plan for cleanup, which involves taking significant steps to eliminate the Infiltration/Inflow, also known as I/I.

Under a Consent Order that has been agreed to by the State, the Federal Government, and the Town of Cheektowaga, the town is required to improve and modernize their sewage treatment system in order to reduce sewer overflows that result in raw sewage draining into

area waterways. Through Friday's meeting, both Town and State leaders agreed on a comprehensive cleanup approach proven to be successful in neighboring municipalities such as West Seneca.

"When it comes to protecting our waterways, we can never act quickly enough, which is why it was so important to me to help facilitate this meeting," said **Senator Kennedy**. "In order to prioritize the remediation of our polluted waters, every agency and municipality needs to also prioritize communication. The Town of Cheektowaga wants to solve this, the DEC wants to solve this, and I want to solve this. By sitting all sides down at the table, our goal was to finally formulate the start of a cohesive roadmap, and we were able to accomplish just that."

"The Town has remained committed to tackling this project comprehensively, and through our most recent meeting, we've now agreed to work strategically and cohesively with the DEC to ensure we see results," said **Supervisor Mary Holtz**. "I thank Senator Kennedy for leading this meeting, and for making this cleanup and communication a priority."

Earlier this month, Kennedy called for the DEC to expedite its review process for the town's proposed plan, which included the creation of a relief sewer. A day after the Senator's call, the DEC issued a response to the Town, ultimately ruling that its plan did not fully conform to the goals laid out in the consent order agreed to by the town, the DEC, and the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The consent order calls for the town to prioritize the eliminate of Infiltration/Inflow, also known as I/I. Infiltration refers to water that has improperly entered the sewer system through deficiencies such as cracked and damaged sewers, while inflow refers to improper connections to the sewer system, such as illegal downspout connections. The DEC has expressed a preference for this problem to be addressed before assessing the need for

additional sewage capacity. I/I results in increased amounts of water in the sewage system during heavy rain, resulting in an overload of the system that much be alleviated by releasing untreated diluted sewage into area waterways.

Kennedy has previously worked with both the town and the state to identify funding sources to help alleviate the costs of implementing the agreed-upon consent order. Back in May, he and Assemblyman Sean Ryan organized a meeting between the DEC, the town, and the EFC to discuss these possible funding streams. Representatives from EFC also present at Friday's meeting, and reemphasized financial assistance options still available to the Town.

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