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Making a Splash for Clean Water in Suffolk

Governor signs Sen. Martinez's legislation, giving voters ability to decide water quality funding initiative



Photo Courtesy of the Office of New York State Governor Kathy Hochul through its [Flickr](#) account.

BAY SHORE, N.Y. - New York Gov. Kathy Hochul today signed the Suffolk County Water Restoration Act, giving county officials the authorization to ask voters to approve a 0.0125% increase in the county sales tax to fund sewer

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expansion and replace nitrogen-polluting septic systems with clean water technology. If approved, the act sponsored by State Sen. Monica R. Martinez is anticipated to generate \$3 to \$4 billion in new water quality funding that will be evenly allocated for sewer projects and upgrading outdated cesspools and septic systems with high-tech nitrogen-removing systems.

"Today, we have given authorization for the voters of Suffolk County to decide how best to address the impacts of nitrogen pollution," said Senator Martinez. "This serious threat to our region's ground and surface waters is reversible, but only by making investments in the technology and infrastructure needed to stop its release into the environment. I am proud to have had this once-in-a-generation opportunity to sponsor legislation that addresses one of Long Island's greatest environmental challenges, and I thank Governor Hochul for her continued support."

With authorization from the state, it will now be up to Suffolk County to approve legislation that puts the funding program to a vote in a referendum on November's ballot. A similar measure failed to make the ballot last year after Suffolk County lawmakers did not approve the referendum due to a dispute over the program's allocation of funding for sewers and septic systems.

Under the plan, if approved by voters, Suffolk's water restoration sales tax will expire in 2060.