

**Testimony of the Environmental Facilities Corporation
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Executive Vice President**

**Joint Public Hearing on
New York Water and Wastewater Cybersecurity Mandates**

Senate Committees on Local Government, Cities 1, and Cities 2

***“Examining the Implementation, Fiscal Impact, and Technical Sufficiency of
Mandatory State Water Security and Wastewater Security Regulations”***

October 1, 2026

Introduction

Good afternoon, Chairs Martinez, Botcher, and Ryan, and invited guests. I am Michael Hale, Executive Vice President of the Environmental Facilities Corporation, or EFC. I am pleased to be here today to speak to EFC’s role in executing Governor Hochul’s nation-leading statewide cybersecurity strategy, and specifically, the first-in-the-nation water infrastructure cybersecurity regulations.

EFC is New York State’s water infrastructure bank. Our mission is to make critical water infrastructure projects affordable for all New Yorkers. We provide funding and expert technical assistance to communities across the State. Consistent with this mission, EFC is helping local governments and public authorities protect our critical water infrastructure from cyberattacks that could disrupt services and threaten public health and safety.

Governor Hochul’s 2025 State of the State Agenda called for the creation of a grant program specifically meant to strengthen cybersecurity protocols of the water and wastewater sectors. The program provides technical assistance and funding for utilities to assess their cybersecurity posture, develop a cybersecurity plan, and improve their cybersecurity resilience. At the same time, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) was directed to draft minimum standards for wastewater systems, and the Departments of Health (DOH) and Public Service (DPS) were directed to draft minimum standards for drinking water systems.

EFC is providing both technical assistance and funding through the Strengthening Essential Cybersecurity for Utilities and Resiliency Enhancements (SECURE) program. This two-pronged response reflects New York’s commitment to providing communities with resources to affordably strengthen their drinking water and wastewater systems against

increasingly sophisticated and dangerous cyber threats, protecting services that millions of New Yorkers rely on every day.

SECURE Technical Assistance

EFC launched its technical assistance program while DOH and DEC were developing minimum standards to provide immediate resources for communities. EFC expanded its existing Community Assistance Teams initiative that since 2023 has bolstered the State's support for local governments in addressing their water infrastructure needs. EFC created an online ["Cybersecurity Hub"](#) to aggregate best practices, exercises, training from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, and other cybersecurity resources. The Hub launched on July 22, 2025. The Hub includes a meeting request form so that anyone can request a one-on-one consultation with EFC, and partner agencies as appropriate. EFC coordinates with DOH and DEC and updates the Hub regularly to ensure the resources align with the State's cyber regulations and remains current. The Hub is one of the top pages visited on EFC's website, which has more than 100,000 users annually. EFC has handled hundreds of inquiries about cybersecurity and coordinated several one-on-one cybersecurity consultations to help communities address their unique concerns and navigate funding opportunities.

SECURE Grants

EFC opened applications for SECURE grants on March 11, 2026, the same day the final cybersecurity standards were adopted by DOH and DEC. EFC provided a streamlined application process to ensure communities could easily apply for this funding. The awards were fast-tracked after federal authorities announced a series of cyber-attacks on water utilities outside of New York. Governor Hochul announced this summer more than \$9 million in grants to support 152 local government projects statewide. The total amount awarded was increased more than three-fold above the original \$2.5 million commitment to meet the full financial needs requested by the communities that applied for SECURE grants.

The grants provide funding for cybersecurity assessments and implementation of cybersecurity controls at both drinking water and wastewater utilities, ensuring EFC can help communities at every stage in the process of strengthening their cybersecurity resiliency. To understand a system's cybersecurity risk, the utility must perform a cybersecurity assessment. EFC's [Cybersecurity Hub](#) provides resources to assist with this effort, as do [DOH's Cybersecurity for Public Water Systems](#) and DEC's [Wastewater Cybersecurity Resources](#) webpages. EFC awarded 126 grants for initial assessments. Once a system has undertaken an assessment and understands its cybersecurity risks, it can

begin to implement cybersecurity measures to address those risks. EFC awarded 26 implementation grants.

EFC engaged with grant recipients in a pair of webinars held soon after the Governor announced the awards. EFC hosted a webinar for assessment grants and another for implementation grants to ensure discussion was tailored to the recipients. Over 150 participants registered for the webinars.

EFC implemented a simplified process to help communities enter into a grant agreement and put the grant funds to work quickly. All awardees have received a grant agreement from EFC for execution. Many communities have already returned their signed agreements so they can timely access the funds.

Closing

Water infrastructure is essential to public health, safety, economic stability and national security, making it an attractive target. Cyber attacks cost money, time, and valuable resources – and can potentially halt water services and threaten public health and the environment. That’s why EFC is helping local systems strengthen their cybersecurity while keeping costs down for communities and ratepayers. Governor Hochul’s initiative to safeguard New York’s water infrastructure is emblematic of New York’s leadership in cybersecurity, environmental protection, and affordability. EFC is proud to support the Governor's vision by helping communities assess risks, implement solutions, and build more resilient water infrastructure.