

*Atlantic Marine Conservation Society * Citizens Campaign for the Environment * City of Long Beach Environmental Advisory Board * Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor * Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island * Concerned Citizens of Montauk * Friends of the Bay * Group for the East End * Operation SPLASH * Save the Great South Bay * Save the Sound * Setauket Harbor Task Force*

November 29, 2021

Hon. Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol
Executive Chamber
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Sign on Letter in Support of S.5022/A.4637

Dear New York State Governor Hochul,

We, the undersigned, urge you to sign S.5022/A.4637 into law to protect Long Island's waterways. This legislation would limit pollution exemptions in ecologically sensitive areas of Long Island, incentivize comprehensive wastewater management solutions, and help combat nitrogen pollution plaguing our bays, lakes, rivers, and estuaries.

Long Island's sole source aquifer and coastal waters are integral to the health, economy, environment, and way of life for its three million residents. Throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties, nitrogen pollution from outdated sewage and septic systems is causing water quality issues, harmful algal blooms, fish die-offs, and hypoxia in local waterways. Billions of dollars have already been invested in combatting nitrogen pollution, and both counties are currently working to upgrade and expand sewer systems and switch to nitrogen-reducing septic systems with the goal of restoring the health of local ecosystems.

This legislation, sponsored by Senator Gaughran and Assemblyman Englebright, would further ongoing efforts to protect Long Island's drinking and surface waters in three significant ways:

- This bill would prevent exemptions to state effluent pollution limits in Long Island's Special Groundwater Protection Areas (SGPAs) or areas where effluent will impact marine waters within ten years or less,
- In these areas, projects would be required to use the best available technology with an emphasis on reducing nitrogen pollution.
- To receive state aid involving water pollution control revolving fund agreements, certain projects would have to consider county-wide or regional wastewater planning.

While the Environmental Conservation Law currently allows for certain exemptions to effluent pollution limits, these **exemptions are not appropriate in ecologically sensitive areas of Long**

Island. In critical groundwater and surface water protection areas, it is imperative state law encourages projects to use state-of-the-art technology to reduce nitrogen pollution and additional contaminants from impacting water resources. Long Island will not solve its nitrogen pollution crisis if loopholes and exemptions allow excess pollution or if all levels of government along with stakeholders are not working in cooperation to create regional wastewater solutions. As organizations that have worked towards a shared goal of restoring healthy waterways for Long Island, we urge Governor Hochul to sign S.5022/A.4637 into law to reduce nitrogen pollution, encourage a regional approach to wastewater management, and prevent exemptions to effluent pollution limits in ecologically sensitive areas of Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

Sincerely,

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