

**LONG ISLAND**

# Residents discuss water quality issues

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A commission studying ways to protect Long Island's aquifer system heard from the public this week at the first of two scheduled hearings before the panel's expected release of several reports on the region's sole source of drinking water.

The Long Island Commission on Aquifer Protection, created last year by acts of both the Nassau and Suffolk county legislatures, met Monday at Nassau County's legislative chambers in Mineola.

"This is an opportunity for us to hear from you, what's on your mind," panel chairman and Suffolk County Water Authority CEO Jeffrey Szabo said to the handful of attendees.

Roughly half an hour of public

comment yielded testimony on issues ranging from chemicals on utility poles that could seep into the groundwater system to New York City's plan to pump water from the aquifers it shares with Long Island.

Several speakers stressed keeping the underground aquifer system free of contaminants.

"I would much prefer this commission to take an active, vocal role in the never-ending war against contamination of the aquifer, which is the paramount and universal concern of all public-water suppliers on Long Island," Stan Carey, superintendent of the Massapequa Water District, told the panel.

The nine-member panel represents each county as well as the Suffolk County Water Authority, the Nassau-Suffolk Water Commissioners Association and

the Long Island Water Conference.

The commission, known as LICAP, was created to address the absence of a central governing body to monitor Long Island's water supply.

In addition to producing a State of the Aquifer report, the panel is tasked with creating a groundwater-resources-management plan that assesses threats to Long Island's groundwater and ways to manage the resource.

The legislation that created the commission also requires that it hold at least one public hearing in each county annually.

The commission is scheduled to hold a second public hearing at 6 p.m. Monday at the W.H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Hwy., Smithtown.