

OPINION

EDITORIAL

Grab millions for ocean pipe

A promising path to finally financing an ocean outfall pipe for Nassau County's Bay Park sewage treatment plant is being cleared through the morass of Sandy funding issues. State officials should take it.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved an additional \$210 million for storm mitigation programs in New York. Sen. Charles Schumer, who pushed for this latest round of Sandy-related funding, wants the state to use the money to pay for part of the \$550 million outfall pipe project instead of directing it elsewhere. That's the right call, no matter the level of past state-federal gamesmanship on this issue. Extending the pipe out to the Atlantic Ocean would have a profound impact on the foul waters and weakened marshlands of the western bays ecosystem, where 50 million gallons of Bay Park nitrogen-laden effluent is dumped daily. And the state owes Long Island after its skimpy treatment of the region in doling out more than \$5 billion in bank settlement money earlier this year.

This funding would make possible the approach we have supported of paying for the pipe from multiple sources. There is \$300 million set aside for New York in a federal competition for Sandy-related resiliency projects; Nassau and the state should apply for that. There are hundreds of millions of dollars in federal clean-water funds available through the state as low-cost loans. And Nassau must chip in, because its lack of action led to Bay Park's long noncompliance with clean-water standards. There is enough available to get the pipe built.

The catalyst is the \$210 million. The ball is in Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's court. Only the state can decide how to use the new dollars. Give Nassau's South Shore the clean water and storm protection it needs. **N**