

# Bellone Announces \$1.25 Million in Grant Funding For Water Quality Protection

JUNE 15, 2016

## ***State Funding will Allow Suffolk County to Further Monitor the Impact Pesticides Have on Water Quality***

(Long Island, NY) Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone recently announced that the county will receive \$1.25 million in grant funding from New York State for further water quality protection and to continue a pesticide testing program. The Suffolk County Department of Health Services will oversee the new phase of the pesticide program, which will significantly increase annual state funding and allow health officials to monitor pesticide impacts on the region's groundwater and water resources. The acceptance and appropriation of the funding was approved by the Suffolk County Legislature on June 1.

“Today marks another step forward that we have taken to reclaim our water here in Suffolk County,” said Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone. “Even though our experts from the Department of Health Services and Planning have identified nitrogen pollution as the leading cause of the degradation of our waters, we still must be mindful of the harmful effects that chemicals, such as pesticides, can have on our water supply. I applaud the state Department of Environmental Conservation for providing this funding to the county as we will continue to be proactive in protecting the most valuable natural resource in our region.”

The monitoring program, which comes at no cost to taxpayers, will be conducted at various sites throughout the county – including golf courses, vineyards, greenhouses, nurseries and farms – with the consent and cooperation of all the involved property owners.

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services will test specific wells twice a year, and results will be available within a few months. If pesticide levels exceed local and state standards at a particular site, various agencies – including the Suffolk County Department of Health Services, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County and the New York State Department of Conservation – will work with property owners to determine why levels are high and will provide assistance to reduce the amount of pesticides entering the groundwater.

In addition, the Suffolk County Department of Health Services will use the data from its findings to update the Cornell Cooperative Extension pesticide usage report in order to help guide groundwater monitoring efforts. The goal is to implement best management practices, support the development of alternatives and minimize pesticide usage and its impacts while supporting the region's agricultural industry. The county will also monitor golf courses near or around shorelines to test for pesticide runoff.

The program will take place for the next five years, and the grant funding will be used specifically for well drilling supplies, equipment and personnel.

The testing program is part of Suffolk County's *Reclaim Our Water* initiative, a comprehensive plan to improve the region's water quality by reducing nitrogen pollution through the implementation of advanced on-site wastewater treatment systems and means of sewerage in targeted areas.

For more information on the grant and the County's water quality monitoring program, log onto [www.suffolkcountyny.gov](http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov).