



Letter: Expand North Shore sewer study

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The Long Island Sound. Photo Credit: Joseph D. Sullivan

Newsday's editorial "Crucial steps against pollution" [Nov. 27] did not address the critical needs of Nassau's North Shore. The vast majority of the 31 municipalities that line these five bays and harbors are not sewered. Septic systems and cesspools fail every day in Nassau County, and as a result, half of the county's waterways are not adequately protected.

Our waterways are vitally important to the local economy. Shellfishing in the Oyster Bay and Hempstead harbors contributed more than \$10 million to the economy in 2014, according to state figures. This is just one of several industries that depends on clean water.

Nassau needs a wastewater plan. Expanding the Hempstead Harbor sewer feasibility study to the entire unsewered area would be a good start. Funding from the State's Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan could be earmarked for this.

We also need to look at septic management. Homeowners and municipalities often forget about systems once they're installed. Jurisdiction between the county and local governments over failing systems needs to be resolved, and codes need to be revised to better facilitate alternative systems that provide greater treatment.

It's also time for cesspool companies to be professionally certified and required to report data on septic systems and pump-outs to the county. The data could help define problem areas. We agree with the editorial that many important steps are being taken, but we need to make sure these steps are comprehensive.

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Editor's note: The writers represent, respectively, the Manhasset Bay Protection Committee, the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee and the Oyster Bay-Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee.

<http://ht.ly/YrQVF>