

## LONG ISLAND

# Call for feds to pay for water treatment

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The federal government should keep its pledge to pay for a new treatment plant in Seaford that purifies water impacted by contamination from the former Northrop Grumman aviation manufacturing site, Sen. Charles Schumer said yesterday.

If the Navy doesn't honor its agreement to pay for construction and operation of the South Farmingdale Water District plant, which the district paid for with a \$5 million bond, then taxpayers could pay an additional \$1,200 over the life of a 20-year bond — or \$60 more a year — according to Schumer (D-N.Y.).

"I am calling on the Navy and the Department of Justice to step up to the plate and hand over the check, and hand over the check now," he said of the Seaford plant. "The Navy and Grumman created the mess; it shouldn't be the water ratepayers that have to pay to clean up the mess."

After years of negotiations, the district secured a \$14.5 million settlement from the Navy in 2010, with Schumer's help, for construction and operation of another water treatment plant on Langdon Road in Farmingdale. The district is seeking \$7.5 million for the Hicksville Road plant in Seaford.

But talks have stalled with the Justice Department, which is negotiating for the Navy, over payment for the Hicksville Road plant completed in the spring. The plant removes iron and volatile organic compounds from 1,400 gallons of water a minute from a supply well in the path of the plume from the Northrop Grumman site in Bethpage.

A Navy official could not immediately comment on Schumer's appeal.

Gary E. Loesch, the district's lead engineer, said the \$7.5 million includes reimbursement for the \$5 million bond from the Town of Oyster Bay for construction and for operational costs over 30

years. He said the district needs "the money ASAP and no later than the next three months."

Loesch said the average water bill for 15,000 customers could be affected if the district doesn't get the money by year's end.

In 2000, the Navy advised the district that its wells could be impacted by the plume, the district said. By then, the district said, the plume had traveled south of Hempstead Turnpike.

Loesch said the contamination hasn't reached the Hicksville well.

Chemicals showed up in monitoring wells in 2004, triggering a contingency plan directing the Navy to set up treatment, which included paying for plants' construction and operation. But the district didn't get the money and secured \$18 million in bonds from Oyster Bay in 2008 for both plants.

In 2010, the district received the \$14.5 million for the Langdon Road plant.