

Long Island water warriors take their plea to Albany

Posted by [Beth Young](#) • January 15, 2014

Last year, a consortium of environmental groups here formed the [Long Island Clean Water Partnership](#) in response to a series of reports on the worsening quality of Long Island's drinking and surface waters.

This week, the group launched a new [website](#) and took a trip to Albany to try to get support from state legislators for the new Long Island Clean Water Protection Bill, which was sent to the Legislature's committees on environmental conservation for review on Jan. 8.

The bill would require the formation of a Long Island Water Quality Commission to oversee a clean water quality and protection plan. The commission would consist of four state representatives appointed by the governor and the state legislature, county leaders, and chairs of subcommittees comprised of citizen groups, scientists and town supervisors.

The bill is sponsored by State Senator Kenneth LaValle and State Assemblyman Robert Sweeney, and it has the support of South Fork State Assemblyman Fred Thiele, who spoke to members of the Long Island Clean Water Partnership during their visit to Albany Tuesday.

"We've continued to see water quality degrade on Long Island in spite of our best efforts with open space preservation and zoning regulations," he said. "It's affecting not only our environment, but our economy, which depends on it for fishing and tourism. Without a comprehensive approach, with all of Long Island participating, we can't solve this problem. This bill provides that approach."

The full text of the bill is available online [here](#).

Among the local groups involved in the Long Island Clean Water Partnership are Group for the East End, Long Island Pine Barrens Commission and The Nature Conservancy. They're planning to host an upcoming water education day on Long Island.

"Our bays and harbors have been plagued with red tides and shellfish closures due in large part to nitrogen pollution from sewage that leads directly into our local waters," said Dr. Marci Bortman, director of conservation for The Nature Conservancy, in the partnership's announcement of their support for the bill.

"There are 117 pesticides detected, a documented presence of pharmaceutical drugs, and increasing quantities of volatile organic chemicals in Long Island's groundwater," said Adrienne Esposito, executive director of Citizen's Campaign for the Environment. "We need to reverse this dangerous trend and work aggressively to protect and restore our waters. Clean water is not a luxury item. It's a necessity. We can stop this harmful trend and are looking toward our elected officials to champion clean water in 2014."



State Assemblyman Fred Thiele discusses the need for a clean water bill in Albany Tuesday | Courtesy Long Island Clean Water Partnership