

## LONG ISLAND

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# Nassau plans system to clean storm water

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Nassau will spend up to \$12 million to install and monitor technology that can remove pollutants and debris from storm-water drainpipes before they reach waterways, County Executive Edward Mangano announced yesterday.

The pilot program calls for Nassau to hire Abtech Industries Inc. of Scottsdale, Arizona, to equip an outfall pipe near the Bay Park Sewage Treatment plant in East Rockaway with an antimicrobial storm-water treatment tool known as Smart Sponge Plus.

“This technology is intended to strengthen our infrastructure and resiliency, reduce beach contamination and engineer outfalls to mitigate backflow and reduce flooding,” Mangano said. “This initiative

is a major step forward in protecting our environment.”

The unit will be placed in an underground concrete vault that intercepts storm water from catch basins. Special sponges soak up pollutants, such as sediment, bacteria and oil from the storm-water runoff before it leaves the outfall pipe.

The three-year contract calls for the Bay Park unit to be installed within a year and monitored for at least six months, said Kenneth Arnold, an assistant to Nassau’s Public Works Commissioner.

Nassau also will consider expanding the technology to the county’s other outfall pipes if the pilot is successful and if state and federal funding becomes available, Mangano said.

Rob Weltner, president of Operation Splash, a Freeport-based environmental group that works to improve water

quality, said storm-water runoff is the “number one enemy” to local waterways, forcing the closure of beaches and shutting bays for swimming and fishing.

“This should be a great asset in our battle against storm-water runoff,” Weltner said.

In 2008, the Village of Babylon hired Abtech to install the Smart Sponge technology at every village outfall pipe that leads to the Great South Bay.

Mangano said the county will continue its efforts to secure \$690 million to build an outfall pipe to send wastewater from the Bay Park plant into the ocean. The Federal Emergency Management Agency rejected the state’s initial funding request in May.

The initiative comes as Nassau rebuilds the Bay Park plant, which was flooded during superstorm Sandy in 2012.

Mangano announced plans last week to privatize the operation of the county’s sewage treatment system and to construct an 18-foot wall around the Bay Park plant to protect it against future storms.