

BELLONE ANNOUNCES \$337K IN FEDERAL FUNDS FOR PECONIC ESTUARY PROGRAM

EPA Grants will Fund Additional Water Quality Testing & Personnel

(Long Island, NY) Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone announced today the Suffolk County Department of Health Services was awarded \$337,000 in grants by the United States Environment Protection Agency (EPA) to bolster the Peconic Estuary Program. The Suffolk County Legislature voted unanimously on December 1st to accept and appropriate the funding.

“As we continue to reclaim our water in Suffolk County, we must be proactive and vigilant against the various pollutants and factors that continue to threaten our waterways, particularly the Peconic Estuary,” said Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone. “I commend the EPA for their continued support and advocacy to help maintain the Peconic Estuary as it is one of the few estuaries across the country to be considered of national significance.”

“I’ve worked with the Peconic Estuary Program for many years, in my role as an elected official from Southold Town as well as a county legislator,” said Legislator Al Krupski, whose district includes the portions of the Peconic River and Peconic Bay. “The work PEP does is critical to the health of the estuary and the economy of the East End. Without EPA funding, the mission of PEP would be seriously hampered.”

The grants will help to provide funding for water quality personnel, including a marine biologist, chemist and boat operator.

In addition, the funding will provide resources to produce a nitrogen load reduction cost assessment and will be leveraged with County funding of various water quality and wastewater treatment projects throughout the region – including the re-opening of shellfish beds, kelp aquaculture feasibility studies,

pilot programs for alternative discharge for decentralized wastewater, pilot programs for vegetated gravel recirculating filtered wastewater treatment systems and more.

Under the conditions of the grant, the funding must be utilized by September 2017 and Suffolk County will provide matching funds toward water quality monitoring programs and projects funded through the Suffolk County Water Quality Protection and Restoration Program.

This latest funding is part of Suffolk County's *Reclaim Our Water* initiative, which includes securing nearly \$400 million in funding for the largest expansion of sewers in Suffolk County since the 1970s, and the release of the 2015 Suffolk County Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan that provides critical recommendations on how to manage and protect the region's water supply.

For more information on the County's *Reclaim Our Water* initiative, visit www.suffolkcountyny.gov or www.facebook.com/stevebellone.

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