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ILLEGAL DUMPING

STATE CRACKS DOWN

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more than half on LIE

9 illegal dumps found upstate,
LI site under probe, officials say

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DEC CRACKDOWN

■ **Sweep finds 9 illegal NY dump sites, officials say**

■ **More than half tickets issued to trucks on LIE**

BY EMILY C. DOOLEY
emily.dooley@newsday.com

State environmental conservation officers and police fanned out around Long Island, the Hudson Valley and New York City last week, finding nine illegal dumping sites and issuing nearly 200 tickets for unlawful disposal, operating without a permit and other violations, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's office announced last night.

More than half the tickets were issued on Long Island as part of roadside checkpoints near exits 62 and 66 on the Long Island Expressway. Trucks were followed in three cases and one possible dumping site will be investigated, although authorities would not say where because the case is ongoing. The nine illegal dumping sites were found in the Hudson Valley.

The crackdown took place Feb. 15 and Feb. 16 and involved more than 100 environmental conservation officers, state police, local police agencies and the state Department of Transportation.

Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos said last week's action was one of several that would happen in the coming months.

"We will continue to do all that we can to keep toxic waste and debris from being dumped in our communities," Cuomo said in a news release announcing the crackdown.

In some cases, officers were able to follow trucks and witness dumping, the DEC said.

Twenty-eight drivers were ticketed and 167 tickets for misdemeanors and safety violations of the state Environmental Conservation Law were issued. Ten vehicles were also taken out of service for safety concerns. An exact breakdown of the charges was not immediately available last night.

Concrete, asphalt, rock, soil and other construction and demolition debris that does not pose an environmental threat can typically be disposed of at permitted facilities. Illegal debris is commingled together and includes items containing



Debris in the back of a truck stopped at a checkpoint on Long Island.

asbestos, treated lumber, roofing shingles, contaminated soil and other substances, according to the Department of Environmental Conservation.

The DEC said an upswing in dumping cases had happened on Long Island recently and law enforcement has said it is often done to avoid costly tipping fees.

The region's nearly 3 million residents rely on underground aquifers as their sole source of drinking water and the toxic waste dumped could taint the resource.

"Those who break New York's environmental laws to help pad their profits are putting our groundwater at risk, and threat-

ening the quality of our health and environment," Seggos said in a news release.

Earlier this month, Suffolk County Police Commissioner Timothy Sini said his agency would launch a pilot program to post cameras in park land where dumping might take place. The Suffolk County Legislature also passed bills to survey some park land to look for dumping and to create a parks watch program similar to neighborhood watch.

"We have zero tolerance for anyone who takes advantage of our natural resources here in Suffolk County and we will continue our efforts to bring those who try to justice," Sini said in a

statement about the crackdown.

The developments came after small pockets of debris were found at Tanglewood Park in Coram.

But the county has been plagued by more-sophisticated, larger dumping operations. Parts of West Hills County Park in Melville near Sweet Hills Riding Center were closed last year after finely processed construction and demolition debris was discovered.

And in early 2014, Roberto Clemente Park in Brentwood was closed after nearly 40,000 tons of construction and demolition debris was found.

Samples taken from both sites found metals, asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, and other toxics.

The West Hills investigation is ongoing.

In the Brentwood case, six people were indicted.

Thomas Datre Jr., Christopher Grabe, Joseph J. Montuori Jr. and Brett A. Robinson pleaded guilty last year to a variety of felony charges, including dumping contaminated materials. Ronald Cianciulli was found guilty of two felonies and two misdemeanors after a bench trial. Charges against Thomas Datre Sr. were dropped.