

# RIVERHEAD NEWS-REVIEW

## Featured Letter: Can't wait forever to improve water quality

by Robert DeLuca | 02/20/2014 7:00 AM

Last week, Joe Fischetti rightly [identified nitrogen as a significant cause of declining regional water quality](#), but I disagree with his view that policy efforts should wait until every technical question is resolved, because I doubt it will ever happen.

Unfortunately, one of the reasons we have seen such slow progress in the development of advanced wastewater technology on Long Island is because there has been no policy to require or incentivize the use of these systems for decades. Policy and technology go hand in hand.



*The view from Route 105 bridge at Indian Island golf course as the Peconic River leads into the Bay earlier this year. (Barbaraellen Koch file photo)*

Hopefully, a policy that promotes or requires more advanced treatment technology will move forward because, among other things, it will create a new marketplace. This marketplace will engage industry, accelerate innovation, improve performance, create competition, lower pricing and provide more options over time. It's no different from the innovation in safety and fuel efficiency of our automobiles, the insulation standards for new homes or the installation of alternative energy systems in homes across the nation. Innovation is driven by standards, performance requirements and incentives. And when it comes to wastewater technology, we need policy that gives us all three.

No one underestimates the challenge we face in addressing the pollution of our local waters, but East Enders have faced major environmental challenges before and consistently found ways to succeed. We have found creative ways to preserve farmland, protect open spaces, restore habitats, recycle our waste and close the dumps that polluted our drinking water. However, in each of these cases, it took substantial legislative action to set the course for change, and the same is true when it comes to managing our sewage.

So whether you care about clean water for fishing, boating or swimming, or you want to support our local economy, protect property values or just eat some local seafood, everyone has something significant to gain from clean water — and our waters are in trouble. To that end, I urge Suffolk Times readers to support the community and elected leadership that is pressing for the policy and funding we need to get this job done equitably, creatively and cost-effectively.

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