

Yes on water proposition

No one questions the need to reduce nitrogen in local waters or the steps that must be taken. The problem is how to pay for it. On Tuesday, residents of the five East End towns — East Hampton, Riverhead, Shelter Island, Southampton and Southold — will have a chance to vote on a referendum that would produce steady funding for that effort at no cost to them. They should seize the opportunity.

Proposition One would extend the Community Preservation Fund's 2 percent real estate transfer tax for 20 years, until 2050. More important, it would let each town spend up to 20 percent of the money for water-quality projects that reduce nitrogen — such as helping homeowners replace failing septic systems with new technology. That would have raised about \$20 million in 2015. It's a terrific idea. CPF money has been used entirely for land preservation, but parcels available for protection on the South Fork, in particular, are dwindling. The referendum would let some of the money be spent on a related and now more urgent need.

Newsday urges a yes vote on Proposition One. — *The editorial board*