



## LONG ISLAND

# Nassau reinstates its water board

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The Nassau County Legislature voted yesterday to revive its 1970s-era Water Resources Board to monitor New York City's move to reopen dozens of wells that dip into the aquifer that the city and county share.

Presiding Officer Norma Gonsalves (R-East Meadow) detailed several amendments to the measure, which garnered Democratic opposition when first introduced last month in committee.

"The goal is to create an agency within Nassau County that will monitor potential

threats to Nassau County's precious groundwater resources," Gonsalves said.

The amended legislation, which passed without opposition, revamps the Water Resources Board, which technically still exists but hasn't met in about a decade.

The revived board would consist of five to nine members with expertise in specific areas, including hydrology, environmentalism or engineering. It would review the actions of neighboring groundwater suppliers that could be a threat to Nassau County.

The amended legislation

specifies that the board meet quarterly and submit an annual report to the county executive and legislature every February.

The legislation also allows the county executive to enter into contracts on behalf of the board to allow it to carry out its duties.

"It's a very, very crucial item and it's an item we need to move forward on as quickly as possible," Gonsalves said.

The legislation is aimed at a plan by the city's Department of Environmental Protection to begin pumping water from as many as 52 shuttered wells it owns in Queens while it repairs leaks in the city's upstate aque-

duct system.

Work to begin reopening the Queens wells is expected to begin in 2016. When the wells begin running, they could pump as much as 33 million gallons of water a day from the aquifer system that lies under geographic Long Island, which includes Queens and Brooklyn.

Past pumping from the Queens wells had led to "serious effects" on the area's groundwater levels, according to a 1986 report from the state Department of Environmental Conservation. Unlike the city, Long Island relies solely on underground aquifers for its drinking water.

Several legislators, including Denise Ford, a Long Beach Democrat who caucuses with Republicans, and Judy Jacobs (D-Woodbury), praised the legislation but expressed interest in also requiring the county health department to begin issuing periodic reports on the county's groundwater — concerns echoed by several speakers from the audience.

"We need to make sure we get this information out there from the board of health," Ford said.

But Gonsalves said she didn't want that to hold up the legislation, noting that the city is expected to issue a report on the environmental impact of the wells reopening this fall.

"We'll continue to work on it," she said.