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Stern Calls on Federal Government to Help Stop Sewage Runoff from Polluting The Long Island Sound

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"The North Shore is blessed with a national treasure, the Long Island Sound, and it's our duty to do all it takes to protect it," ...



Huntington, NY - March 21, 2016 - Today, Suffolk County Legislator Steve Stern announced that he will make it a priority in Congress to fight for federal EPA grants to help extend mainline sewage systems to underserved North Shore communities. Added sewerage infrastructure is desperately needed to help protect the Long Island Sound from septic tank and cesspool runoff pollution. Stern's call comes after years of advocacy in the Suffolk Legislature to expand Long Island's sewer system because a strong sewage infrastructure leads to clean water and a clean environment.

Just yesterday, Newsday reported that nitrogen levels in [the Long Island Sound](#) have skyrocketed because of sewage management. According to the study, runoff from personal septic tanks and cesspools account for more nitrogen pollution than storm runoff, fertilizer, or sewage treatment plants. At various Long Island Sound watersheds, septic tanks and cesspools accounted for 75% of all nitrogen pollutants. Increased nitrogen in waterways causes red tides and damages vulnerable coastal habitats.

"The North Shore is blessed with a national treasure, the Long Island Sound, and it's our duty to do all it takes to protect it," said Suffolk County Legislator Steve Stern. "I am deeply disturbed by a recent reports of increased nitrogen in the Long Island Sound - a direct result of a lack of access to our local sewage systems. Our community desperately needs financial support from the EPA to help expand our wastewater infrastructure because we must keep our Sound and our drinking water free of toxic runoff. I pledge to fight in Congress for EPA grants to expand the sewage systems in Nassau County and Suffolk County because it is a federal responsibility to protect the Long Island Sound."

"Fighting to protect the Sound and our drinking water is not new for me," Stern continued. "I have long supported expanding sewer systems on Long Island because our piecemeal approach is a threat to our environment. But we need the EPA's help or else we will continue to put the Sound at risk. I sponsored legislation at the County level to expand sewerage for this very reason and in Congress I plan to urge the EPA to give us the resources we desperately need."

Throughout his career in the Suffolk County Legislature, Steve Stern has fought to expand sewage coverage and create new special sewage districts. Stern also passed a feasibility study for a Suffolk County Infrastructure Bank to fund projects just like this. The lack of access to sewage systems poses an enormous threat to our drinking water and, as noted in Sunday's Newsday report, our environment.

Just last year, at the urging of local officials, Suffolk County received a \$388million state and federal Superstorm Sandy recovery grant to expand sewer services to 12,000 South Shore homes. But, unfortunately, over 70% of Suffolk County is still without access to basic sewage infrastructure. North Shore communities, in particular, are the last line of defense against Sound pollution and remain largely devoid of sewage services.