

STANDING AT GREAT NECK'S WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY, GILLIBRAND CALLS FOR NEW FEDERAL COMMITMENT FOR WATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Every Billion Dollars In Spending For Water Infrastructure Creates More Than 26,000 Jobs

Gillibrand: Federal Government Has Failed To Provide The Resources Long Island Needs To Rebuild Its Water Infrastructure And Enable Real, Long-Term Economic Growth

Great Neck, NY – Standing at Great Neck's wastewater treatment facility, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Congressman Gary Ackerman today called for a federal commitment to invest in water infrastructure projects. Also joining were Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel, Supervisor Jon Kaiman and members of the Great Neck Water Pollution Control District. Studies have shown that every billion dollars in spending for water infrastructure creates more than 26,000 jobs. With Long Island property taxpayers often stuck footing the bill for such projects, Senator Gillibrand, a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, is urging Senate Leadership to include major new investments for water infrastructure in the upcoming jobs legislation.

"Relieving the property tax burden is one of my top priorities. In order to sustain New York's workforce, character and people, the federal government must play its part to assist local communities address the burden of high property taxes – and that starts with water infrastructure," Senator Gillibrand said. "Here in Great Neck we have a shovel-ready, priority water infrastructure project, waiting for federal investment. The federal government has failed to provide the resources Long Island needs to rebuild these structures and enable real, long-term economic growth. Our local governments and communities cannot and should not be left to cover these costs alone. Taxpayers simply cannot afford it. It is time for the federal government to deliver Long Island its fair share."

"Investing key resources in water infrastructure projects is critical to the future of our region," said Congressman Ackerman. "It is essential that our water facilities are maintained and improved. Upgrading key facilities such as Great Neck's wastewater treatment plant is critical to spurring economic growth, creating jobs, ensuring a cleaner environment and protecting the health and safety of all Long Islanders. I look forward to working with Senator Gillibrand on this extremely important issue."

"I am delighted to partner with Senator Gillibrand on a project that is near and dear to my heart, namely the upgrade of the Great Neck Water Pollution Control District," said Assemblywoman Schimel. "The Senator now becomes part of an intricate network of stakeholders who are in pursuit complete what will be the most efficient, environmentally responsive sewer district on Long Island. This sewer treatment plant will serve as a model for others in New York State and I welcome her advocacy for help in funding of this important plant."

"This is where federal policy affects local reality. We will put people to work, improve the environment, meet the needs of a local community and show that government can work when we work together at all levels," said North Hempstead Supervisor Kaiman. "Senator Gillibrand is standing for principle, policy and real people whose lives will be made better while helping the economy grow stronger."

“We can’t thank Senator Gillibrand enough for her support for our project,” said Commissioner Jane Rebhuhn. “The new waste water treatment plant will not only create much needed jobs, but include cutting edge environmentally-friendly technology, while saving residents money and increasing service.”

Across New York, communities are burdened by antiquated water systems that do not adequately serve residents or businesses. According to reports released by the New York State Department’s of Health and Environmental Conservation, New York will need at least \$75 billion over the next 20 years for repairing, replacing, and updating aging drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. Senator Gillibrand is working to ensure that local taxpayers aren’t stuck footing the bill for New York’s failing infrastructure.

One such project is a wastewater treatment facility expansion project in Great Neck on Long Island. This coastal community of nearly 25,000 on the shores of Long Island Sound has finalized plans for a significant consolidation and expansion project that will cost approximately \$60 million dollars and create more than 480 local jobs. The project will help to meet federal and state standards for nitrogen load reductions in the Sound, helping to restore this great water body that helps to generate \$5.5 billion dollars in annual economic impact, and historically was one of the most significant fishing grounds in the country. The Great Neck project will consolidate area operations reducing capital costs by nearly 50 percent, and will integrate a number of energy-efficiency improvements to help reduce long-term costs to the community. Additional federal support for would help this project, and water infrastructure projects all across New York.

Senate Jobs Legislation

Senator Gillibrand today urged Senate Leadership in include additional federal dollars for water infrastructure in the next jobs legislation being considered by Congress. With unemployment among construction trades as high as 30 percent on Long Island, new, good-paying construction jobs are desperately needed. Every dollar spent for development generates three times as much back in economic impact. In addition, investments in water and wastewater help to alleviate the upward pressure on communities to raise local taxes to fund these extremely expensive projects. For Long Islanders, who are among the highest-taxed residents in the country, this would be very welcomed relief.

Water Infrastructure Financing Act

As a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee, Senator Gillibrand is playing a leading role on the Water Infrastructure Financing Act. Senator Gillibrand helped secure \$20 billion nationwide for the Clean Water Revolving Fund over the next five years. The current authorization was set at a mere \$600 million. The legislation also authorized \$14.7 billion for the Drinking Water State Revolving Funds over the next five years. The current authorization that expired in 2003 was authorized at only \$1 billion per year.

Last year, New York received just over \$75 million from the Clean Water Revolving Fund. Under this legislation, New York would receive \$244 million next year – an increase of more than \$168 million dollars. This will go a long way to rebuild failing water infrastructure, create thousands of jobs and reduce the local property tax burden.

In addition, Senator Gillibrand worked to ensure that poor communities within larger urban areas are eligible to receive additional support reserved for disadvantaged communities, including low interest loans, loan forgiveness, negative interest rates and increased subsidization.

By committing federal dollars to flow to local governments and communities, Long Island can open up more opportunities for economic growth through downtown revitalization, create cleaner environments and protect community health and well-being through clean water.

Investing in infrastructure not only enables economic development and long term sustainability, but it helps create jobs and can lower the property tax burden on Long Island families. Efficient sewer systems are not only cost-effective, but it also helps protect our natural resources, which are among Long Island's most cherished assets. Inefficient systems can release harmful nitrogen into our waters, polluting the ecosystems for fish and wildlife. Stronger sewer infrastructure benefits everyone - from homeowners, small businesses and young adults to nature enthusiasts, fishermen and farmers.

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