

# TOWARD SAFER WATER

## NY grants \$200M (\$14.25M on LI) to help remove contaminants

BY DAVID M. SCHWARTZ  
david.schwartz@newsday.com

New York State announced on Tuesday \$200 million in grants to help communities remove “emerging” contaminants from drinking water, including \$14.25 million for projects at the Bethpage Water District and in Suffolk County to clean up chemicals found in firefighting foams and certain household products.

The announcement came on the same day a state panel missed a deadline in state law to recommend safe drinking level standards for the contaminants. Federal health officials have not yet set legally enforceable standards, known as maximum contaminant levels, for the “emerging” contaminants PFOS, PFOA and 1,4-dioxane.

The money to Suffolk County municipalities and Bethpage includes:

- \$9.7 million for a water main in Wainscott, where contaminants perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, and perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS, which were used in firefighting foams, have been detected in more than 150 private wells.

- \$3 million for the South Huntington Water District to treat the compound 1,4-dioxane, a possible carcinogen found in some household products including some body washes, detergents, baby products and shampoos.

- \$1.65 million to the Bethpage Water District to treat 1,4-dioxane.

The compound 1,4-dioxane has been detected in drinking water wells from Montauk to Western Nassau.

PFOA and PFOS are chemicals that were used in firefighting foams and to make carpets, clothing, furniture fabric and other materials resistant to water, grease and stains, according to state health officials. The EPA in a health advisory said exposure to the chemicals can cause cancer, developmental issues in fetuses during pregnancies or to breast-fed infants, liver damage and other



Bethpage Water District was awarded \$1.65M for water cleanup.

health effects.

The detection of PFOS and PFOA in groundwater prompted the state to name Gabreski Air National Guard Base in Westhampton Beach and a Suffolk County fire training center in Yaphank to the state Superfund list.

The new state grants come from a \$2.5 billion Clean Water Infrastructure Act passed in 2017 by the State Legislature and signed by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo.

The legislation also created a 12-member state panel to examine safe levels of the emerging compounds that have been detected in trace amounts in Long Island drinking water. The panel was supposed to finalize its recommendation a year from when it first convened at Stony Brook University on Oct. 2 of last year.

State officials said the recommendations were delayed when a new federal report in June suggested tighter restrictions on PFOS. State officials said the recommendation was delayed because New York is trying to work with other Northeast states on a regional approach to the contamination.

“Setting a drinking water standard is one thing, but having funding in place to allow water providers to pay for treatment systems to deal with emerging contaminants is re-

ally essential,” said Brad Hutton, deputy state commissioner for public health.

PFOA and PFOS can be treated with existing technologies. But 1,4-dioxane treatment is more expensive, and local water authorities have pilot projects to test how to remove the compound.

The state had faced criticism from environmentalists and Democratic and Republican lawmakers over the delays.

“This is critically needed funding to advance clean drinking water across Long Island,” said Adrienne Esposito, executive director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment, a nonprofit based in Farmingdale. “But we’re still waiting for a drinking water standard. The public deserves a standard, and the longer we wait the more in danger we are.”

State Sen. Kemp Hannon (R-Garden City), along with other Senate Republicans, called on Cuomo to set drinking water standards at a news conference last week.

“I’m critical that it took so long,” Hannon said Tuesday. But he said, “I’m happy we’re here now.”

Assemb. Englebright (D-Setauket), chair of the Assembly’s Environmental Conservation Committee, said while the grant money is important, the state also needs to set a safe drinking water standard and

not wait on the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

“This should not be seen as satisfying the full legislative intent,” Englebright said of the \$200 million in grants. “The best way to manage an issue of emerging contamination sources is to set standards, to prevent contamination in the first place.”

The state’s Drinking Water Quality Council will meet Oct. 17, and plans to reconvene in late November or early December to recommend enforceable drinking water standards for the emerging compounds, accord-

ing to a state news release.

Paul Granger, a council member and water district superintendent in Port Washington, said, “The technology is there, but we will need financial assistance, or water rates will increase significantly.”

**INTERACTIVE**  
Contaminants  
in LI water that  
are not regulated  
[newsday.com/li](http://newsday.com/li)

## Check Out Our Great CD Rates!

6 Month CD\*

**2.00%**  
APY

1 Year CD\*

**2.25%**  
APY

3 Year CD\*

**2.60%**  
APY

Visit one of our conveniently located branches to open your account today!

Apple Bank 

Established 1863 · Member FDIC

[www.applebank.com](http://www.applebank.com)

Annual Percentage Yields (APYs) disclosed are effective as of 8/21/2018 and may be changed by the Bank at any time. \*CDs require a \$1,000 minimum balance to open and earn interest. Early withdrawal penalty may apply. CDs must be opened in person at an Apple Bank branch. Offer may be withdrawn at any time without prior notice.

21-42802021