



Vickers also notes that water demand in UWNY's service area has been largely flat since 2000 despite an 11 percent population growth, a trend that could continue and is likely the result of state and federal water efficiency standards, including those governing improved-efficiency appliances. Vickers wrote the national water efficiency standards for plumbing fixtures adopted under the U.S. Energy Policy Act of 1992 and authored or co-authored precedent setting state laws on efficiency standards.

The report also recommends that a combination of conservation, water reuse technologies, rainwater harvesting and green infrastructure options be tapped to help Rockland further drive down demand and increase water supply independence.

County Legislature Chairman Alden H. Wolfe praised Vickers for her professional analysis and said her independent findings provide a foundation for true water resource management.

"It provides vital information that can guide us as we focus on demand-side management versus strictly supply-side activities, which simply add to the supply no matter the costs," Wolfe said.

County Executive Ed Day said, "Rockland County's economic and environmental future is enhanced by our ability to maximize precious natural resources.

"This report identifies common-sense solutions to increase Rockland County's water independence, which will ultimately lead to a long-term supply of safe, clean water," Day said. "I commend all the members of the Task Force for their efforts to promote water efficiency and sustain healthy water resources for future generations."

Margie Turrin, a scientist at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory who chairs the Task Force's Conservation Committee, said the report helps give direction on how to proceed.

"The Conservation Committee of the Rockland County Water Task Force is very happy to have this independent analysis of our water resources use and management," Turrin said. "The report will be extremely useful as we identify and recommend effective conservation projects to the Task Force and the County."

The Task Force was created in June 2014 and is comprised of 19 members representing the County Executive, County Legislature, United Water, and local governments, academia, business and advocates.

It resulted after United Water's effort to build a costly Hudson River desalination plant galvanized residents into opposing the facility in favor of further studies of the existing supply and demand, and deeper exploration of alternatives.

In November 2014, the PSC determined that while Rockland may one day need more water, it doesn't need it until at least 2020. In the same decision, the PSC said opponents of the plant would now have the time they needed to implement conservation measures designed to possibly delay or prevent the project.

Task Force chairwoman Cornell said the Task Force is moving forward aggressively to develop strategies for conservation and leakage control, building upon the Vickers Report. Additionally, Task Force committees are working on a number of priority issues; a green infrastructure feasibility study on groundwater recharge and surface water storage to be done by engineering students at the Stevens Institute of Technology is on track to start in September.