



Press Release



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Rockland County Slated For \$250K Funding For Water Conservation Efforts in 2016 State Budget

County Executive Day, Legislator Cornell Praise Award Assemblymember Jaffee Says Conservation Paramount

New City, NY (April 4, 2016) - Rockland's impressive water conservation efforts will get a big boost in the 2016 New York State Budget, which awards the county \$250,000 to continue its work.

"This funding will help us to perform tasks that our residents have made clear are important to them and to Rockland County's future when it comes to insuring adequate and safe drinking water for generations to come," County Executive Ed Day said.

"This award will allow us to continue with our efforts to significantly reduce water use in Rockland, ensuring that water demand does not exceed supply," County Legislator Harriet Cornell said. "At the same time, it will enable us to educate our residents and business owners about our water – how precious it truly is and how important it is that we act as good stewards to protect it. Rockland is a model for the state."

The Rockland County Task Force on Water Resources Management, which is chaired by Cornell and includes the County Executive and Legislative Chairman Alden Wolfe as members, submitted a request for the funding through Rockland's state legislators and spearheaded by New York State Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee.

Both the New York State Senate and Assembly back the measure.

"Water conservation is paramount in Rockland County if we wish to avoid costly new treatment plants that would also increase the cost of water itself for residents and businesses," Assemblymember Ellen Jaffee said. "I congratulate the Water Task Force for having such a forward-thinking approach and focusing on meaningful conservation, so we can make sure we have the safe drinking water supply we need to thrive."

The funding must specifically be used for the development of a long-term water conservation strategy, according to the state Senate and Assembly bills.

The Task Force will use the money to prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Implementation Plan, and to implement outreach and education measures, as well as incentives and water audits. The conservation efforts would look at the water supply demand forecast through the year 2035.

Most recently, Rockland took a significant step regarding water conservation by amending the County's procurement law to require the purchase and installation of water-efficient plumbing fixtures in County facilities whenever feasible.

Cornell proposed the requirement, which was supported by the County Legislature and approved by the County Executive last month.

Going forward, when feasible, the County would purchase and install plumbing fixtures with WaterSense labels, which use 20 percent less water and perform as well or better than conventional models, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The EPA established the WaterSense Program in 2006. It is a national, voluntary partnership program designed to reduce municipal water use across the country through water-efficient products and the construction of water-efficient new homes.

Rockland County became a WaterSense Promotional Partner last year, after approvals by the County Legislature and the County Executive and at no cost to taxpayers. Promotional Partners primarily engage in education and awareness activities.

In the 21 months since it was created, the Task Force has experienced multiple successes, including submission of a report by national water conservation and efficiency expert Amy Vickers, *Water Losses and Customer Water Use in the United Water New York System*.

This analysis, which provides baseline information about the status of Rockland's Water supply system, will help identify possible conservation efforts.

Vickers has recommended 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.

State Legislators must still vote on the New York State Budget, which then goes to Gov. Cuomo's desk.

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