



A SHARED AGENDA FOR

CLEAN WATER

IN NEW YORK STATE

Established in 2017, the *New York Clean Water Coalition* is comprised of water suppliers, wastewater treatment operators, environmental organizations, environmental justice organizations, and other water stakeholders. The Coalition works collaboratively to develop a shared agenda for funding, policies, and actions needed to protect clean water in New York State. The items listed are not exhaustive of the policies the organizations are supporting; however, the items listed reflect the top shared clean water priorities and policies for 2026.



Phone: (516) 390-7150 | Email: farmingdale@citizenscampaign.org
www.citizenscampaign.org | 225A Main Street Farmingdale, NY 11735

NYS CLEAN WATER

PRIORITIES FOR 2026

CLEAN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE ACT FUNDING

Maintain \$500 Million for the Clean Water Infrastructure Act (CWIA) in SFY 2026-27, as part of long-term commitment of \$4.5 billion over 5 years:

Since 2017, New York has invested \$6 billion in the CWIA, making NYS a national leader in clean water protection. However, we still have substantial work to do to address NY's drinking water and wastewater infrastructure needs, which EPA estimates at nearly \$90 billion. Aging and failing drinking water and wastewater infrastructure threatens drinking water, our environment, economy, and public health. Continued investment in the CWIA is critical to protect public health, while saving local ratepayers money and keeping clean water affordable for all. With significant federal funding cuts and rollbacks to clean water protections, New York must step up and fully fund this critical program with \$500 million in SFY 2026-27, and use this appropriation to "jumpstart" a multi-year commitment of \$4.5 billion dedicated to the CWIA over the course of the 5-year state financial plan.

While we support the full range of programs under the CWIA, which are essential to protect our water from its source to the tap, critical priorities for 2026 include:

- **Lead line replacement:** There is no safe level of exposure to lead in drinking water, especially for our children. New York State has an estimated 555,696 lead drinking water pipes—per EPA regulations, all must be replaced by 2037. Governor Hochul's Lead Infrastructure Forgiveness and Transformation (LIFT) program is an important tool to help cover costs not fully paid for by federal grants, minimizing the financial burden of these vital projects on local ratepayers.
- **Private well testing and treatment:** The final 2025-26 budget included a new line in the CWIA, which will provide \$15 million for testing and treatment of private drinking water wells contaminated with emerging contaminants. This burgeoning program must continue in order to address the widespread problem of polluted private wells across the state.
- **Septic System Replacement:** The NYS Septic Replacement Program is a highly successful program

replacing antiquated septic systems and cesspools, especially in Suffolk and Nassau Counties on Long Island. Robust funding is needed to continue progress on Long Island, but also to expand to additional counties in need, including the Adirondacks, as well as other participating counties and their designated priority waterbodies that are impaired due to failing septic/cesspools throughout the state.

- **Onsite Treatment of Landfill Leachate:** Landfill leachate, the toxic liquid that is created as water percolates through landfills, is contained and typically sent to municipal wastewater treatment plants, which are not designed to remove many harmful PFAS chemicals—resulting in pollution of receiving waterbodies. Additional resources are needed to provide effective onsite treatment of toxic leachate at municipal landfills.
- **Invest in Asset Management Programs:** Additional investment is needed to help more communities develop these programs, which helps identify weaknesses in wastewater treatment systems and promote repairs before system failures occur. Asset Management Programs improve resiliency, longevity, and proper operation of wastewater treatment plants, which protects our environment and reduces costs over the long term.

We support a CWIA that is transparent and equitable. We urge the legislature and the Governor to:

- **Include funding line allocations in the CWIA:** Lining out CWIA category funding, similar to the structure established in the original 2017 CWIA, will help ensure all our clean water needs are being adequately met while not being overly prescriptive.
- **Require Annual Reporting on CWIA Spending:** Providing transparency into how CWIA funding is spent is necessary to ensure that this funding is adequately supporting all the programs within the CWIA and the communities with the most significant clean water needs.
- **Require that At Least 35% of CWIA Funding Go to Disadvantaged Communities:** Similar to the CLCPA and Environmental Bond Act, the CWIA should require that at least 35% of funding go to disadvantaged communities, which are disproportionately harmed by pollution.



STOP PFAS AT THE SOURCE

Toxic PFAS, also known as “forever chemicals,” are polluting drinking water sources and threatening public health in communities across the state. As we work to limit PFAS in drinking water, we must turn off the tap to additional PFAS chemicals. It is far more cost effective and protective of public health to stop PFAS at its source, rather than paying for clean up later. According to a study conducted in Minnesota, PFAS can be bought for \$50 - \$1,000 per pound, but costs between \$2.7 million and \$18 million per pound to remove and eliminate from municipal wastewater, depending on facility size. To stop PFAS at its source, we support:

- **Banning PFAS in Household Products and Cosmetics.** *We urge New York State to pass legislation to ban unnecessary uses of PFAS chemicals, including household products (i.e. cookware, textile articles, rugs, fabric treatments, ski waxes, architectural paints, children’s products, dental floss, and cleaning products), and cosmetics.*

- **Stopping PFAS Before it Reaches Our Wastewater Treatment Plants:** DEC’S proposed *Technical and Operational Guidance Series (TOGS) 1.3.14: Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) Permitting Strategy for Implementing Guidance Values for PFOA, PFOS, and 1,4-Dioxane*, provides a clear framework for municipal wastewater utilities to adopt source-reduction strategies for PFAS. We strongly believe that targeting PFAS and similar contaminants at the source—before they reach wastewater facilities— not only serves as a strategy to reduce contaminants in effluent and biosolids, but also ensures that the financial responsibility for treatment rests with the industrial and commercial contributors, rather than being passed on to ratepayers. *We urge DEC to finalize and implement TOGS 1.3.14 as soon as possible.*

AGENCY STAFFING

Maintain existing agency staff levels in the 2026-27 budget: State agencies play a critical role in protecting clean water across NYS, from its source to the tap. In light of the hundreds of agency staff positions that are at risk due to federal funding cuts, the Governor and legislature should prioritize maintaining existing agency staff levels in the state budget. However, *we strongly oppose any efforts to raid environmental programs, such as the NYS Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), to support agency staff. Fixing one environmental problem by creating another is not the solution. We support maintaining agency staff levels at the:*

- **Department of Health:** The NYSDOH Bureau of Public Water Supply Protection is now tasked with an unprecedented level of responsibility to implement a host of state and federal regulations, including the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements and new PFAS Maximum Contaminant Levels. To ensure that these critical public health protection regulations are implemented in a timely manner and NYS DOH has primacy in overseeing implementation and enforcement, DOH cannot afford staff cuts.

- **Department of Environmental Conservation:** In order to tackle our most pressing water pollution issues, it is imperative that the NYS DEC have the staffing to properly enforce the rules and regulations that protect our ground and surface waters, and to implement their many responsibilities under the Clean Water Infrastructure Act.

- **Environmental Facilities Corporation:** EFC plays a critical role in disbursement of water infrastructure funding, including the largest program in the CWIA, the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act (WIIA). Maintaining EFC staffing will help to ensure that grant dollars keep going out to communities and protecting local waters.



GET LEAD OUT OF DRINKING WATER

Find Lead Pipes Faster: According to the U.S. EPA, an estimated 555,696 dangerous lead pipes deliver water to homes and businesses in NYS, causing contamination and disproportionately harming disadvantaged communities. Federal regulations will require replacement of all lead pipes by 2037; however, utilities first need to find lead pipes in order to replace them. *To avoid timely delays—caused by unresponsive or uncooperative customers—in finding all the lead pipes throughout the state, we support legislation clarifying that property owners must respond to water utilities’ requests to conduct free service line inspections and authorizes tenants and other adult occupants to provide access for an inspection in the case of an absentee landlord or unresponsive property owner.*

PROTECT OUR WATERS AT THE SOURCE

Protect Our Waters from Road Salt: Road salt used for deicing roads contributes to significant threats to drinking water sources across the state. *We support legislation that will create the Road Salt Pollution Action Plan and Reduction Council, along with an advisory committee, to monitor and reduce the harmful impacts of road salt on drinking water and the environment.* The Council will assess the effects of road salt, set recommended usage limits, propose reduction incentive programs, establish maximum safe sodium levels in drinking water, and make policy recommendations to state and local governments.

Allow Sewer Authorities to Manage Stormwater: Managing stormwater is critical to protecting water quality and reducing flooding. Allowing sewer authorities to take actions to manage stormwater, such as the differentiation of water and sewer charges from the costs of stormwater management, and incentivizing green infrastructure projects, will help communities protect water quality and better manage flooding. *We support “Rain Ready” legislation that clarifies the power of sewer authorities to take actions related to managing stormwater, if they so choose.*



ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS:

Citizens Campaign for the Environment
New York Water Environment Association
Adirondack Council
New York League of Conservation Voters
Environmental Advocates NY
Natural Resources Defense Council
The Nature Conservancy in New York
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter
New York Section American Water Works Association

Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper
New York Rural Water Association
Long Island Water Conference
National Audubon Society
Scenic Hudson
Save the Sound
Freshwater Future
Earthjustice
Riverkeeper



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