

New York Senate Republicans Release \$8 Billion Clean Water Spending Plan

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On March 12, 2017, New York State's Senate Republicans released a budget plan that proposes spending nearly \$8 billion on clean water and sewer projects.

The budget includes a \$5 billion Clean Water Bond Act that, according to a New York Senate press release, "would provide critical funds for many different types of projects to prevent contamination that endangers public health and safety, clean up pollution, protect water sources, and promote the growth of the economy through infrastructure investment." The budget also includes the creation of a new Drinking Water Quality Institute made up of public health experts, scientists, water providers, and commissioners of the state Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation. The Institute would be charged with establishing New York-specific standards for unregulated contaminants that are at least as stringent as federal health advisories and developing a list of contaminants for which testing is required by public water suppliers. The budget plan also includes support of \$2 billion in clean water funding allocated in Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo's executive budget.

The budget plan is part of the Senate Republicans' "one-house budget" proposal. New York State's Senate and Assembly are both scheduled to pass budgets this week and must negotiate a budget compromise before April 1, 2017. The \$5 billion bond authorization would need to be approved by voters. The projects that would be funded are yet to be determined.

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