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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

County Legislators Martinez and Hahn to Introduce Bill Mandating Increased Water Testing in Wake of Dumping Scandal

Hauppauge, NY- Suffolk County Legislator Monica R. Martinez and Suffolk County Legislator Kara Hahn, Chairwoman of the Environmental, Planning and Agriculture committee, were joined by Citizens Campaign for the Environment and local concerned residents to put forward legislation that would increase environmental safety in the wake of toxic dumping in the Town of Islip. The bill requires oversight by the Suffolk County Health Department in the cleanup of Roberto Clemente Park in Brentwood. It mandates additional water monitoring wells to track contaminants as well as community meetings for greater stakeholder involvement.

"The dumping of illegal toxins which occurred at Roberto Clemente Park is egregious," said Legislator Martinez. "It's upsetting to know the only functioning public park that the youth of the Ninth Legislative District have access to was dumped on. This heinous act may have exposed our children and residents to a multitude of health risks. The effects of the dumping will be seen in years to come. We need to act now. We cannot wait until the effects are seen on the health of our residents. The monitoring of our groundwater needs to be conducted immediately, which is why I am happy to introduce this piece of legislation with my colleague, Legislator Hahn. This bill will authorize Suffolk County Department of Health to test groundwater for toxic chemicals at Roberto Clemente Park."

"Members of the public have lost their park and their trust in the Town of Islip's ability to ensure a comprehensive clean up," said Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director, Citizens Campaign for the Environment. "This bill provides oversight and confidence that all contaminants will be cleaned up and the community's air will be monitored. The legislation ensures that the Suffolk County Department of Health will be able to meet their mandate to protect our water resources and the public's health. The community deserves an independent and comprehensive clean-up and full restoration of their park. Suffolk Legislators Kara Hahn and Monica Martinez are acting in the best interest of all of Suffolk County residents."

Legislator Hahn condemned the treatment of the community. "The illegal dumping of toxic waste in Roberto Clemente Park is an act of contempt against the people of Brentwood and Suffolk County," she said. "We have had our sense of safety taken from us, along with our ability to enjoy this wonderful park whose doors have now been closed to the residents of Suffolk County."

Roberto Clemente Park, located in Brentwood, is the scene of an estimated 50,000 tons of asbestos-laden and contaminated material illegally dumped throughout the park. Hazardous metals found in the 50,000 tons of toxic debris dumped on Roberto Clemente soccer fields include antimony, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, copper, zinc and cobalt. Tests ordered by the Suffolk County District Attorney revealed levels of banned pesticides, including chlordane, banned in the United States in 1988; DDT, banned in 2001; and Dieldrin, no longer produced in the United States because of harmful effects on humans, wildlife, and fish. Material was dumped into a recharge basin—designed to recharge Long Island's sole source drinking water supply.