

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



Office of Suffolk County Legislator Kevin J. McCaffrey, 14th District

For Immediate Release
Date: April 28, 2016

Contact: Zach Giglio
Phone: 631-854-1100

LEGISLATOR MCCAFFREY AND REPUBLICAN CAUCUS ANNOUNCE OPPOSITION TO BELLONE WATER TAX



Left to Right: Legislators Thomas F. Barraga, Tom Cilmi, Kevin J. McCaffrey, Robert Trotta, Leslie Kennedy

Hauppauge, NY: On Wednesday, April 27, 2016, Suffolk County Legislator Kevin J. McCaffrey and the Republican Caucus held a press conference at the William Rogers Building to announce their opposition to the recently proposed Bellone Water Tax.

During the press conference, the Republican Caucus recognized the need to ensure Suffolk County has clean water but stressed that the Bellone Water Tax was not the answer. Some residents, like those in the Southwest Sewer District, will end up paying twice for sewers.

“Residents in my district and districts around Suffolk County have been paying for a sewer district for over 30 years,” said Legislator and Republican Caucus Leader Kevin J. McCaffrey. “The Bellone Water Tax would make these residents pay for the same thing twice.”

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The Bellone Water Tax was announced as a fee to reduce nitrogen levels in drinking water but is being seen by the Republican Caucus as another tax that will be used in an attempt to balance the Suffolk County Government's budget, which has a debt of \$1.2 billion.

"At this point I see this as nothing more than a tax increase on water usage for all," said Legislator Leslie Kennedy. "Some may never see the benefit of sewers or nitrogen reduction cesspools in their lifetime."

While County Executive Bellone has claimed that the Bellone Water Tax will result in a tax of approximately \$75 per homeowner, other estimates have that figure much higher. Recently, the Suffolk County Water Authority said that based on average water use in Suffolk County, the tax would be closer to \$125.

"The Bellone Water Tax would cost me \$215 a year based on my average usage over the last three years. With only two of us in the house most of the year living in a modest home, I would imagine many people in Suffolk will pay considerably more," said Legislator Tom Cilmi. "This is in addition to the hundreds of dollars many already pay annually through the quarter cent sales tax dedicated to water protection. This is just another tax, pure and simple, imposed on residents who can't afford it."

Governor Andrew Cuomo has already appropriated \$383 million in funds to Suffolk County to invest in expanding the sewer system and leveraging clean water technology. The Bellone Water Tax would supplement those state funds by annually and endlessly taxing Suffolk County residents based on their water use.

"This is yet another attempt by Steve Bellone to get into the pockets of taxpayers," said Legislator Robert Trotta. "It is a ploy to use water protection as a means of covering for his mismanagement of county finances."

The Republican Caucus committed to fighting what they said was an unfair and unjust tax on Suffolk County Residents and called on community leaders, elected officials and taxpayers to stand up for residents in Suffolk County and put an end to the Bellone Water Tax proposal.

Legislator McCaffrey represents Suffolk County's 14th Legislative District which encompasses the Village of Lindenhurst, Babylon Village, the hamlets of West Babylon and North Lindenhurst, portions of Copiague, North Babylon and Babylon's barrier beach communities.

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