

# Supervisor Romaine Details Proposed Law Amendment to Enhance Water Quality in the Carmans River Watershed

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**Pictured left to right are Founder and President of Defend H2O Kevin McAllister, Supervisor Romaine, Councilman Dan Panico, Long Island Pine Barrens Society Executive Director Richard Amper and Deputy Town Attorney Beth Reilly.**

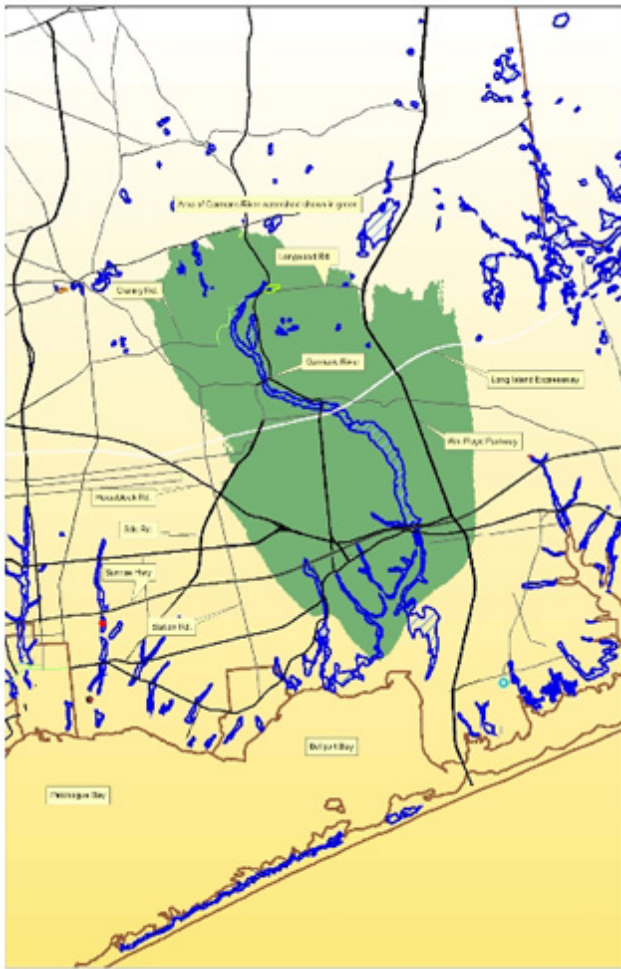
**Farmingville, NY** - Supervisor Ed Romaine was joined by Town officials and environmental leaders to present details of a proposed amendment to Chapter 78 of the Town Code. The amendment, co-sponsored by the Supervisor and Councilwoman Connie Kepert, establishes stricter discharge requirements for new intermediate flow sanitary systems and sewage treatment facilities, as well as upgrades to existing systems and facilities, located within the 100-year groundwater contributing area of the Carmans River. The amendment was unanimously adopted by the Town Board during a public hearing held at the January 29 Town Board meeting.

The new standard, designed to protect the ecological integrity of the river, is necessary because the standard in use by the Suffolk County Department of Health Services is generally intended to protect human health, but is not sufficient to protect ecological health. The law applies to all properties with existing or future Intermediate

Sanitary Flow of waste water between 1,000 and 30,000 gallons per day. Based on a review of the scientific literature and the best available technology (BAT), a standard of 3 parts-per-million (ppm) over a twelve month rolling average in the effluent of medium flow sewage treatment plants has been identified as the best possible way to ensure the long term protection of water quality in the Carmans River Watershed. The new law indicates that at no point shall the monthly average exceed 5 ppm.

Supervisor Romaine said, "Existing state and county standards allowing sewage treatment plants to discharge 10 parts per million of nitrogen are not protective of the Carmans River ecosystem. Our new, stringent standard would offer greater protection, and result in the long-term conservation of the river and its water quality for the benefit of current and future generations."

"The stricter discharge standards outlined within this code amendment for the 100-year contributing area of the Carmans River will serve to protect the ecological health of the river by reducing nitrogen loading into the water," said Councilwoman Connie Kepert. "I commend the Supervisor and the entire Town Board for continuing to support the implementation of the 2013 Carmans River Conservation and Management Plan in an effort to preserve this



precious natural resource for generations to come."

Councilman Dan Panico said, "Living on an island, one of our most vital resources is our water - both groundwater and surface water. For far too long we have seen them degrade and today we are announcing yet another step to reverse this trend. I commend the Supervisor and entire Town Board for leading by example."

Richard Amper, Long Island Pine Barrens Society Executive Director said, "The current county sewage discharge standard is undermining drinking and surface water quality Island-wide. Brookhaven's legislation to toughen the sewage discharge standard is welcome news. Other governments should follow suit."

Kevin McAllister, Founder and President of Defend H2O said, "The new sewage discharge standard enacted by Brookhaven Town is groundbreaking legislation. It's the first time nitrogen discharges will be restricted for the purpose of protecting the ecological health of surface waters. I'm confident this law will be the catalyst for similar legislative actions throughout our region. "

Using a science-based approach, a goal for preventing further degradation and the restoration of the Carmans River water quality were identified in the Carmans River Conservation and Management Plan. The plan, passed unanimously by the Town Board in October of 2013, called for a new science-based standard for effluent from medium flow sewage treatment plants. The standard is intended to protect the river's ecosystem from the harmful effects of too much

nitrogen including harmful algae growth, the proliferation of non-native aquatic plants, low dissolved oxygen levels, and other ecosystem changes caused by an excess of nitrogen.

The Carmans River Conservation and Management Plan contains 19 categories of recommendations to preserve and protect the Carmans River. It guides land use in the watershed for many years to come and serves as a model for environmental preservation. This plan expands the core area of the Central Pine Barrens region by over 1,600 acres and, for the first time in history, expands the compatible growth region as well. It promotes open space acquisitions; recommends landmark nitrate and sanitary standards; and recommends a series of up-zonings to truly protect the watershed. To see a copy the plan, go to [www.brookhaven.org](http://www.brookhaven.org).

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