



Queens Civic Congress

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QUEENS CIVIC CONGRESS OPPOSES WATER & SEWER TAX HIKE, While Deal Avert the 18% Awaits Approvals, Water Board Can Do More

Statement to the NYC Water Board, Thursday December 13, 2007
by Corey Bearak, President, Queens Civic Congress

Thank you for this opportunity for the Queens Civic Congress to oppose the unnecessary 18% Water and Sewer tax gouge first disclosed as most New Yorkers began to celebrate Thanksgiving. My name is Corey Bearak. I serve as President of this umbrella group that represents over 100 civic, cooperative, condo, tenant and other community associations throughout the borough of Queens. Our membership represents almost every community in the borough.

The Queens Civic Congress appreciates last week's announcement of a *Stay* of this increase and thanks Queens Council Members David Weprin and James Gennaro, chairs of the Finance Committee and Environmental Protection Committee respectively, for their hearings and advocacy on behalf of all New Yorkers. We call it a *stay* because New Yorkers pay 500% more than they paid when the City introduced water metering. City Hall needs to step up and take actions it took a pass on – this goes back several administrations – to deliver clean water to New Yorkers at the lowest cost. The current mindset continues us on a path to pay more and we need that to change. These comments apply even without the hike.

The Queens Civic Congress calls on City Hall to take the following 10 reforms:

- 1) Stop the abdication when it comes to securing the support New Yorkers should expect from Washington and Albany for the mandates each imposes. At a time when one of our brightest local lights chairs the House Ways and Means Committee and many other Members hold other senior posts in Congress the lack of any plan to capture appropriate federal aid and relief staggers the mind. The Queens Civic Congress questions why City Hall lets Washington and Albany off the hook when 70% of capital project costs result from the mandates.
- 2) In our platform, the Queens Civic Congress continues to question a filtration plant in a park when the time exists to pursue filtration avoidance in the Croton Watershed and advocate for the Federal reforms needed to empower New York City to implement these cost-effective alternatives. New York City and its water board owe a duty to its taxpayers and citizens, not to upstate special interests for whom we effectively subsidize development, when we acquiesce in a building a filtration plant for the Croton system.

- 3) The alternative to filtration plants – membrane filtration as called for by the Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition – provides a lower cost means – about 1/13th the latest cost - to provide safe and pure drinking water. It involves less energy use, less maintenance cost, less footprint, less chemicals. It has become far and away the water filtration technology of choice across the nation.
- 4) Further, some of the remainder of the now \$2.8 billion for Croton and additional half-billion for UV for Cat-Del might be better allocated to more land purchases and conservation easements; where property owners become recalcitrant, the state must step in for the City which gave up its right to use condemnation as part of the watershed agreements forged with the State and upstate communities.
- 5) We remain particularly concerned about the use of Water taxes for projects unrelated to water and sewer needs that should be funded from the regular budget. The Croton project funds projects that remain meritorious examples for City capital funding. This is clearly outside the scope of water supply and sewer systems.
- 6) The New York City capital budget should fund the capital costs for water supply and treatment facilities.
- 7) End the annual rental payment to the city from the Water Board, what my predecessor Sean Walsh called a “Ponzi scheme,” Stop it! Reduce rates accordingly.
- 8) Cease the practice of setting rates before the City adopts its budget. Our platform, found on our website, www.queensciviccongress.org, specifically calls for this reform.
- 9) The water board needs to get on board and support efforts to ease the impacts of rate increases on our seniors – both homeowners and tenants – who lived on fixed incomes. The Queens Civic Congress supports legislation which would provide a tax levy subsidy to households 65 or older and with incomes below the current Senior Citizens Homeowner Exemption eligibility limit to help offset the increasing water rates. From the time of its proposal it was clear any relief would not be funded by other water ratepayers so why remain silent?
- 10) Finally, make sure the Department of Environment Protection improves its focus and delivery when it comes to routine matters that when neglected cause city residents and business great havoc and burdensome costs. Make sure the DEP meets its obligation to keep the existing storm and combined sanitary-storm systems in a state of good repair. The example last summer and fall of backups into homes and apartments reflect more than just mother nature at work.

Thank you.

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For more information please refer to:

- * [2007-11-28 Testify Against Water Tax Hike](#)
- * [2007-11-26 Speak Out Against Water Tax Hike](#)
- * [2007-10-22 Queens Civic Congress Opposes \(18 percent\) Water and Sewer Tax Hike.](#)
- * [2007-04-24 Oppose Water Rates Increase](#)

Find Queens Civic Congress [Members](#) on the web at: <http://queensciviccongress.org/organization/members.php>.

Queens Civic Congress Members

Association of Old Forest Hills ♦ Auburndale Improvement Association ♦ Bayside Civic Database ♦ Bayside Clear-Spring Council ♦ Bayside Hills Civic Association ♦ Bayswater Civic Association ♦ Bay Terrace Community Alliance, Inc. ♦ Bellaire-BellVill Civic Association ♦ Belle Harbor Property Owners Association ♦ Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association ♦ Bellerose Hillside Civic Association ♦ Bell Park Manor Terrace Community Council ♦ Bowne Park Civic Association ♦ Briarwood Community Association ♦ Cambria Heights Civic Association ♦ Civic Association of Utopia Estates ♦ C.O.M.E.T. (Communities of Maspeth-Elmhurst Together) ♦ Concerned Citizens of Laurelton ♦ Cornucopia Society ♦ Creedmoor Civic Association ♦ Deerfield Area Association ♦ Doug-Bay Manor Civic Association ♦ Douglas Manor Association ♦ Douglaston Civic Association ♦ Dutch Kills Civic Assn. of Long Island City ♦ East Flushing Civic Association ♦ Federated Block Associations of Laurelton ♦ Federation of Civic Associations of Southeast Queens ♦ Floral Park Community Council ♦ Flushing Heights Civic Association ♦ Flushing on the Hill Taxpayers Association ♦ Forest Hills Chamber of Commerce ♦ Forest Hills Crescents Association ♦ Forest Hills-Van Court Association ♦ Fresh Meadows Homeowners Association ♦ Georgetown Mews ♦ Glendale Civic Association of Queens ♦ Glen Oaks Village Owners, Inc. ♦ Greater Astoria Historical Society ♦ Greater Whitestone Taxpayers Civic Association ♦ Harding Heights Civic Association ♦ Hillcrest Estates Civic Association ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #1 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #2 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #3 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #4 ♦ Hollis 11423 Block Association ♦ Hollis Hills Civic Association ♦ Holliswood Civic Association ♦ Hollis Park Gardens Civic Association ♦ Holly Civic Association ♦ Hyde Park Gardens Cooperative ♦ Jackson Heights Beautification Group ♦ Jamaica Estates Association ♦ Jamaica Hill Community Association ♦ Juniper Park Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Hills Homeowners Association ♦ Kew Gardens Improvement Association ♦ Kissena Park Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Bay Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Pines ♦ Long Island City Alliance ♦ Malba Civic Association ♦ Meadowlark Gardens Owners ♦ Middle Village Property Owners Association ♦ Mitchell Linden Civic Association ♦ Neponsit Property Owners Association ♦ Newtown Civic Association ♦ North Bellerose Civic Association ♦ North Flushing Civic Association ♦ North Hills Estates Civic Association ♦ Northwest Clearview Homeowners Association ♦ Norwood Civic Association ♦ Oakland Terrace/ Gardens Community Council ♦ Off Broadway Homeowners Association ♦ Our Neighborhood Improvement Association ♦ Our Neighbors Association of Ozone Park, Inc. ♦ Parkway Village Historical Society ♦ Queensboro Hill Neighborhood Association ♦ Queens Colony Civic Association ♦ Queens Community Civic Corp. ♦ Queens Village Civic Association ♦ Ramblersville-Hawtree Civic Association ♦ Richmond Hill Historical Society ♦ Ridgewood Property Owners and Civic Association ♦ Rockaway Park Homeowners/ Residents ♦ Rocky Hill Civic Association ♦ Rosedale Civic Association ♦ Royal Ranch Association. ♦ Southeast Queens Concerned Neighbors ♦ South Ozone Park West Civic Association ♦ Springfield/Rosedale Community Action Association ♦ Station Road Civic Assoc. of Auburndale ♦ Sunnyside Gardens/Harrison Place Homeowners ♦ Surrey Estates Civic Association ♦ Union Turnpike Merchants Association ♦ United Forties Civic Association ♦ United Neighbors Civic Association ♦ Waldheim Neighborhood Association ♦ Wayanda Civic Association ♦ West Cunningham Park Civic Association ♦ Westmoreland Association ♦ Woodside Community Council