



# Queens Civic Congress

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## QUEENS CIVICS ON FILTRATION PLANT

Queens Civic Congress President Sean M. Walsh sent the following letter to Queens State legislators on the proposed legislation to permit the siting of a Water Filtration Facility in a City park:

June 18, 2003

Dear Legislator,

The NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is attempting to site a chemical treatment/filtration plant in Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx for the purpose of treating water from the Croton Watershed for drinking purposes. The bill before you, S.4791-C would authorize the city of New York to discontinue the use of certain portions of the park as parkland and to use them for the proposed plant.

We respectfully urge you to question the inconsistencies in this bill, as well as the dangers it presents to human health, and future encroachments on parks throughout New York State.

1. DEP maintains that the plant is necessary in order to ensure that state and federal health standards are met. However, based on DEP's own scientific results as displayed on their web-site, Croton water is high quality and fulfills all state and federal health standards. DEP itself states that "filtration for the Croton is not needed in the near future..." DEP tests show that Croton water has been improving in all important aspects. For example, the level of haloacetic acids, considered a possible danger to human health, has decreased. The expenditure of \$1.5 billion for a chemical treatment/filtration plant is not needed. Clean, safe and affordable water can be ensured at a fraction of that cost by means of proper watershed protection. The DEP's program for its Catskill/Delaware system is a model that could also be applied to the Croton.

2. The greatest proven drinking water threat to human health comes from cryptosporidium - responsible for over 100 deaths and 400,000 people becoming ill in Milwaukee in 1993. Yet, Croton water has only half the crypto concentrations of the Catskill/Delaware system which has obtained filtration avoidance.

3. It is bad policy to alienate 43 acres of Van Cortlandt Park to site a huge chemical/industrial complex, a blatantly non-park use. If this precedent were set, no park anywhere in NYS would be safe.

4. During the seven-year construction period, the constant blasting, dust, and exhaust from hundreds of trucks and construction vehicles will exacerbate the already disastrously high asthma rate among neighborhood children. Their health and even their lives would be jeopardized for the sake of building a facility which is not needed and with money that the City will acquire by cutting back on other, more urgent projects.

5. The \$200 million that the City is offering as “honey” (NY Times editorial) to compensate for damage done to the park will be used to embellish parks throughout the Bronx, and only in the Bronx. This expenditure will be charged to all water ratepayers who, as a result, will see their water rates increase.

6. If the Senate were to approve the bill, then prior to approval, the Senate should insist that the source(s) of the proposed funding be clearly identified in the bill, and the moneys set aside in escrow prior to commencement of construction of the plant.

The Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition, Inc. (CWCWC) is a not-for-profit organization representing 55 groups (over 200,000 people) throughout New York City, Westchester and Putnam Counties. The Coalition’s main goal is to protect the Croton Watershed.

Sean M. Walsh  
President Queens Civic Congress

The Queens Civic Congress represents 100 civic, community, condo, co-operative, homeowner and tenant organizations. Its membership represents almost every community in the borough. The entire Queens Civic Congress Platform may be viewed on the internet at <http://www.queensciviccongress.org/Platform/02platform.htm>.

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