



Queens Civic Congress

P.O. Box 238, Flushing, NY 11363 (718) 343-6779 fax: (718) 225-3366
www.queensciviccongress.org queensciviccongr@aol.com

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Corey Bearak

Executive Vice President:
Patricia Dolan

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May 18, 2009

New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Assemblymember:

The Queens Civic Congress supports Assemblyman Lancman's [A.1255-A/ S.1735B](#), which will provide a tax credit to offset the cost of a sewer check valve. Assemblyman Lancman's legislation will provide badly needed relief to the residents of Queens. As an organization that represents more than one hundred Queens civic groups, we believe that now is the time for the state to act on behalf of our friends and neighbors by enacting Assemblyman Lancman's bill.

In recent years, Queens communities have been regularly subjected to devastating summer floods that fill basements with raw sewage and cause serious property damage. Sewer check devices are one of the few means available for Queens homeowners to protect their property from the scourge of summer flooding. During rainstorms or other instances that might cause drainage issues, these devices help prevent backflows from flooding out from the overwhelmed sewer systems in the properties where they are installed. Since the threat posed by periodic sewage overflows is a danger to public health and safety it is in the public interest to make sewer check valves available those who need them.

Assemblyman Lancman's bill would help bring down the costs of sewer line check valve devices for homeowners and non-profits by providing them with a property tax abatement to help defray the cost of the device. Under Assemblyman Lancman's legislation, homeowners and nonprofit institutions in New York City will receive an abatement of up to fifty percent (up to two thousand dollars) towards the cost of installing a sewer line check valve to control sewage backflow. For homeowners this relief will come in the form a credit against their property tax, while for nonprofit organizations the abatement will be a credit against their sewer and water bill.

Ultimately, it is vital that the necessary upgrades be made to sewer lines in Queens so that problem of summer flooding is permanently put to an end. In the meantime, it is essential that residents are given all possible relief. Until New York City makes the serious infrastructure improvements necessary to solve this problem, homeowners can prevent raw sewage backflow by installing a sewer line check valve. Assemblyman Lancman's legislation will put this vital mitigation measure within reach of middle class families and help ameliorate the problems caused by seasonal flooding.

Patricia Dolan
Executive Vice President

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Queens Civic Congress Members

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