

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR KARA HAHN



FIFTH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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**SUFFOLK TO BEGIN TESTING WATER SAMPLES FOR
POTENTIAL HUMAN CARCINOGEN 1,4 DIOXANE**

RIVERHEAD, NY – Suffolk County will soon begin testing groundwater for the presence of 1,4 Dioxane, a solvent stabilizer that is considered a probable human carcinogen by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. This comes after the passage of a bill earlier this week sponsored by Suffolk County Legislator Kara Hahn (D-Setauket) that directs the Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) to test for it during routine samplings beginning in January 2015.

More commonly known as dioxane, a study by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) of exposure to the chemical in drinking water reported increased incidences of liver, nasal cavity and skin cancers and tumors. This highly water soluble compound is a legacy industrial solvent stabilizer and now is also used in many household products including laundry detergents, cosmetics, shampoos, toothpastes and hand soaps. Since dioxane is easily immersed into wastewater, its discharge into groundwater through sanitary systems appears to be extremely likely.

“While the potential health impacts of 1,4 Dioxane are clear within the scientific community, what is not currently know is how much of this compound is in our ground and drinking water,” said Legislator Hahn. “Adding this potential contaminate

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to the battery of toxins the Health Department already tests for will help us understand if dioxane is a problem, the extent it is a problem and what steps may be required to protect public health and our water supply.”

1,4 Dioxane has been found in more than 40% of Suffolk County Water Authority (SCWA) wells (250 wells). The Suffolk County Department of Health Services is responsible for overseeing the SCWA testing and for monitoring to alert for growing concerns to our drinking water. According to testimony in front of the Legislature’s Health Committee on September 4, 2014 from Walter Dawydiak of the SCDHS, the Department’s testing for 1,4 Dioxane will be in a prioritized manner, dealing with small non-community wells and private wells, eventually incorporating it into stream and marine data collection as well.

The bill was adopted via “Certificate of Necessity”, in part, due to rising concerns about the county’s long-term water quality. Earlier this year Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, who will sign this legislation in the coming days, said “There is no greater challenge to our future than the water quality crisis that we must now begin to confront as a County....Clean water should be the birthright of every Long Islander, and it’s time we tackle this crisis together and Reclaim Our Water.”

“The adoption of this policy directive gives our scientists one more tool to help figure out just how far we need to go in order to protect, preserve and reclaim our water,” Legislator Hahn concluded.

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