

**Testimony of The Honorable Laura A. Gillen (NY-04)**  
**“Member Day Hearing”**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies**  
**March 25, 2025**

Chairman Simpson, Ranking Member Pingree, and Members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to highlight a critical issue for the Fourth Congressional District of New York, encompassing the South Shore of Long Island. My district suffers from legacy water contamination, aging infrastructure, and unacceptable water quality issues that require the attention and aid of the Federal government.

I'm here today to urge you to increase Federal investments in clean water programs, like the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) grant program. I also request your continued support for vital community project funding in FY26, which provides direct Federal assistance to help towns across my district invest in critical upgrades to clean up their water and keep residents safe.

The village of Hempstead in my District relies on a water plant that is more than a hundred years old – one of the oldest in our region. Just last year, village officials found alarming levels of toxic PFAS chemicals in their drinking water. PFAS contamination can cause serious health problems, including links to cancer, liver damage, and immune system disorders.

The village of Garden City in my district is also working to replace lead water pipes for their residents. According to EPA estimates, there are nearly 500,000 lead pipes in homes across the State of New York, the sixth highest total in the country. Toxic lead exposure can result in learning disabilities and stunted growth for children, and heart, kidney, and reproductive issues for adults.

Last year, the House passed an FY25 Interior and Interior Environment Appropriations bill which included \$1 million for the Town of Hempstead's East Meadow water supply to help remove the harmful chemical 1,4 Dioxane. Unfortunately, this project -- and \$30 in direct funding slated to go to my district -- was ultimately stripped from the full-year FY25 continuing resolution that Congress passed earlier this month.

My constituents, and Americans across the country, should not be subjected to cancer-causing chemicals and toxic lead every time they turn on a faucet in their home. Communities like Hempstead, Garden City, and many others across the Fourth Congressional District and Long Island need Federal funding to ensure the water their residents use to bathe, clean, and drink is safe.

Federal funding for water infrastructure is not just vital to the health and safety of our constituents – it is vital to our local economies, too. For every \$1 billion we invest in the State Revolving Fund, approximately 28,000 jobs are created.

While Congress has taken recent action, including a historic investment through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to improve and upgrade our water infrastructure, it is not nearly enough. Last year, the EPA estimated that it will cost \$630 billion over the next twenty years to meet the nation's water infrastructure needs.

I am committed to working in a bipartisan manner to help make sure that all residents of my district can access the clean water they deserve. For Fiscal Year 2026, I urge the Committee, and all of my colleagues in Congress, to support vital projects in my district and across our country to help us meet that goal. I know there is strong support for getting this done, on both sides of the aisle. I will work with anyone, in either party, to bring back these necessary resources for Long Island.

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, thank you for your time today and for your work on this Committee to help serve the American people. I look forward to working with you and with all of our colleagues to make the communities I represent on Long Island healthier, safer places to live.