

LONG BEACH

# Drinking water forum set

BY JOHN ASBURY  
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The state of Long Beach drinking water will be discussed at a July 24 public forum, several weeks after a sample tested positive for E.coli and prompted a three-day boil water order.

The Long Beach Department of Public Works, the Nassau County Department of Health and the state health department will give a presentation on water quality and answer questions from residents.

Officials confirmed a positive E.coli test June 21 at a home on Grand Avenue. Residents were ordered to boil their water and chlorine was doubled to 2 parts per million to kill the bacteria.

Long Beach school officials closed three elementary schools for one day after they said a student tested positive for E.coli infection. State health testing is still pending to confirm the child's illness and to determine if there is any link to the city's water supply.

The forum is sponsored by State Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Beach), Nassau County Executive Laura Curran, Long Beach city officials, Legis. Denise Ford (R-Long Beach) and Assemb. Missy Miller (R-Atlantic Beach).

Kaminsky said questions need to be answered about the source of the E.coli contamination, the state of the city's water infrastructure and the safety of increased chlorine levels.

"I think that during the E.coli emergency, water quality in Long Beach came to the front of everyone's mind and a lot of questions raised about the state of water and whether it was OK to drink," he said. "I know too many families now who won't drink from the faucet."

City officials said a robo-call was issued to residents one hour after they received a positive test for E.coli. All water tested negative June 25, and samples are taken weekly for routine testing.

OAKDALE

# SIGN IS OK, ISLIP OFFICIALS SAY

10-foot placard supporting Trump ruled free speech

BY ANTONIO PLANAS  
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Oakdale resident Alan Herrick says he is within his rights to display his 10-foot Trump sign on his front lawn despite objections from some neighbors — and Islip officials agree, calling it free speech.

The plywood sign that reads "GOOD JOB TRUMP" has been suspended high on Herrick's lawn against two wooden poles for about a year. As news events played out during President Donald Trump's time in office, Herrick has added messages to the homemade sign, including "BUILD THAT WALL" and "TRUMP 2020." He also fastened an open toilet seat and cover to the bottom of it with lettering on the seat — CNN, NBC and CBS. The words "FAKE NEWS" are written in marker. Another addition to the sign reads: "NO COLLOSION" [sic] "CRY BABIES."

Herrick, 75, lives across the street from the Oakdale-Bohemia Middle School and a half-mile from Sunrise Highway, a major thoroughfare in



Alan Herrick with his sign supporting President Donald Trump.

and out of the hamlet. The sign has proved as divisive as the nation's politics, drawing the ire of some residents who call the political billboard an eyesore.

"That's too bad. I'm for the guy. I'm letting everybody know that I am for the man," Herrick said in an interview last Thursday. "If they don't like it, they can come meet me in the backyard if they want."

Islip spokeswoman Caroline Smith said the town has received two complaints about the sign and code enforcement workers have investigated. The

sign is on private property, and not on Islip land, and does not need a permit, Smith said.

"There was no sight obstruction, and it's not obscene," she said in an email. "Code enforcement has the authority to regulate obscenities under the Supreme Court precedent, but it's a relatively high standard. This is a case of protected speech."

The nearby middle school is part of the Connetquot Central School District. School officials did not return calls for comment.

Oakdale resident Sal Longhiano, 73, said even if the sign sits on private property, its sheer size and location across from a school are problematic.

"It's too big. It's an eyesore. It needs to come down," Longhiano said. "It's a polarizing kind of statement being made right in front of the school. Instead of Trump's name on there, if it was Obama's name on there, I would be equally concerned."

Lesla Combs, 63, an Oakdale resident, said: "To put something that loud, on a busy, busy road next to a school . . . it looks horrible for people coming into our town."

Herrick's neighbor, Teresa Backowski, 60, is "disappointed" in Trump's first years in office and said the sign is an eyesore, but it's "a free country. He's got his opinions."

Herrick, a retired contractor, said it took him a couple of days to make the sign. And it has received all kinds of attention since it's been up, including being defaced and written over with vulgarities. The sign has also been egged, he said. Some drivers have gestured crudely at Herrick as they pass by, but others have mailed him cash for "sign maintenance" and stopped by his home to thank him.

"It's my property. My thoughts. I'm not hurting anybody," he said.

NASSAU COUNTY

# Bill would end construction fee for nonprofits

BY SCOTT EIDLER  
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Nassau would eliminate a construction fee for nonprofit development projects under a bill to be considered Monday by the county legislature.

Nonprofits currently must pay a "cost-of-construction" fee, calculated by multiplying a project's estimated total building cost by 0.75 percent. The fee had been "a hindrance" to nonprofits looking to develop or expand in Nassau County, said Evelyn Tsimis, deputy county executive for economic development.

Nonprofit organizations would continue to pay other fees, including for traffic impact studies and a \$1,500 filing fee.

County officials want to reform the Department of Public Works' complex and costly "239-F" permitting and application process for development projects fronting county roads.

"We want to see development by these nonprofit institutions, which play a very important role in the county in providing social, economic, cultural amenities, and we want them to be able to develop projects," Tsimis said.

Nassau County has waived the construction fee in the past, including for Memorial Sloan Kettering's MSK Nassau, a \$180 million, 114,000-square-foot cancer facility that opened in April in Uniondale. Tsimis said the county wanted to codify the informal practice into county law.

The impact to the county's finances would be "minimal," officials with Nassau County Executive Laura Curran's administration said. The county has collected \$375,000 in cost-of-construction fees from nonprofits over the past five years. During that time period Nassau collected a total of \$3.9 million from developers for all "239-F" fees, which include other filing fees.

Legis. Richard Nicoletto (R-New Hyde Park), the presiding officer, said he wanted to hear testimony from the administration on Monday, but added, "I want these nonprofits, hospitals to be doing this work, and you don't really want to add in some cases . . . millions of dollars in terms of cost. We literally could

defeat a project in some cases."

Kyle Strober, co-chairman of Nassau's Blue-Ribbon Panel to Streamline Development Approvals, said the group is reviewing, investigating and researching new policies for the Department of Public Works. County officials said it takes, on average, between 12 and 24 months for construction projects to win county approvals, and the lag is due to old technology, understaffing, and the failure of outside engineers to meet county development standards.

The fee structure also is under review.

"An approval that can take 18-to-24 months can stymie any economic development project on Long Island," Strober said.