



# S.W.I.M. Coalition

Stormwater Infrastructure Matters: utilizing stormwater as a resource, not a waste!

## Bronx River Raw Sewage Overflows

### **ACTION ALERT!**

**Recently approved water quality plans ensure the Bronx River will continue to be polluted for decades to come.**

The Bronx River is a 24 mile river spanning through White Plains in Westchester County, through the Bronx, by the Bronx Zoo and Botanical Gardens, and flowing into the East River. The Bronx River is home to many aquatic species, like beaver, river herring and American Eels. The waterways are frequently enjoyed by rowers and paddlers, and the waterfront by bikers, runners and pedestrians.

However the Bronx River is still plagued by ongoing water pollution. Nearly every time it rains, raw sewage and polluted stormwater overflow from New York City's antiquated sewers. In a typical year, 455 million gallons of this "combined sewer overflow" (CSO) are dumped into the Bronx River.



After years of planning, the City has been revealing long term plans for waterbodies throughout the City to reduce CSOs (called Long Term Control Plans, or LTCPs). However, there is a major issue with the plans: they don't go far enough to reduce CSO!

In 2015, the City submitted the Bronx River LTCP to the State, and the State quietly approved the plan in March 2017, which allow massive amounts of raw sewage overflows to continue for decades. The table below shows what was proposed and approved, the volume of CSO reduced, how many times a year there will be a CSO event, how much it will cost and when it will be complete.

LTCP Waterbody	Proposal	Annual CSO Volume (in millions of gallons per year)			Number of overflows/year (after LTCP)	Cost	Anticipated Construction Completion
		Baseline*	Reduced in the LTCP	Volume w/ LTCP Implemented			
<b>Bronx River</b>	Redirect CSO to East River	455	170	285	31	\$150 M	2026

\*The baseline does not necessarily reflect present-day conditions. It assumes implementation of grey infrastructure from previous plans as well as green infrastructure that will manage stormwater from 10% of the impervious surfaces of the combined sewer area.

To see official documents about the LTCPs, visit the State Department of Environmental Conservation's website: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/77733.html>.



**Here are some of the reasons you should be concerned about the approval of these plans:**

- **Public health not protected:** The plans fail to meet federal health standards for safe contact with the water.
- **No actual CSO reduction:** The LTCP merely redirects CSO from the Bronx River to go into the East River by building out a new CSO outfall.
- **Decades of pollution:** There will still be 285 million gallons a year of CSO directly into the Bronx River, even after some flow is diverted to the East River. CSO overflows will continue to happen about with as little as a half inch of rain, or about 31 times a year. This will continue for decades under the current plan.
- **Pollution from Westchester County not addressed:** Stormwater runoff and illicit sewage discharge from Westchester County are major sources of pollution for the Hutchinson River. The State has failed to enforce a plan by Westchester County to reduce these pollution sources.
- **Short-changing green infrastructure:** The plan ignores cost-effective opportunities to reduce CSOs with green infrastructure on public and private property.
- **Flawed public process:** The public process is not reaching much of the community or allowing for meaningful input.
  - o Both the City and the State have failed to communicate ongoing pollution to the community. (How did you hear about CSOs and the development of LTCPs?)
  - o The State neglected comment letters written by environmental advocates questioning the public process.
  - o The approval of these plans was not publicly announced, but rather quietly posted on the City and State's websites.



**GET INVOLVED!**

- **Contact your local elected officials,** starting with your City Council Member:

**Councilman Ritchie J. Torres**

*(Bedford Park, Fordham, Mount Hope, Bathgate, Belmont, East Tremont, West Farms, Van Nest, Allerton, Olinville)*  
718-842-8100  
573 East Fordham Road  
Bronx, NY 10458

**Councilman Rafael Salamanca Jr**

*(Concourse Village, Crotona Park East, East Tremont, Hunts Point, Longwood, Melrose, Morrisania, Port Morris, West Farms)*  
718-402-6130  
salamanca@council.nyc.gov  
1070 Southern Boulevard  
Bronx, NY 10459

Visit [www.mygovnyc.org](http://www.mygovnyc.org) for a list of all your elected officials and their contact information.

- **Keep up to date!**

- o Join the [SWIM email list](#) for citywide updates
- o Check with the **Bronx River Alliance** for local activities and actions: [www.bronxriver.org](http://www.bronxriver.org)

Stay updated on this issue! SWIM will send alerts and updates on actions you can take. Join our [email list](#), follow us on Twitter [@SWIMcoalition](#) and on the web at [www.swimmablenyc.info](http://www.swimmablenyc.info) regularly. For more information contact us at [swimmablenyc@gmail.com](mailto:swimmablenyc@gmail.com).



Stormwater Infrastructure Matters (SWIM) is a coalition of 70 member organizations dedicated to ensuring swimmable and fishable waters around New York City through natural, sustainable stormwater management practices.

