



# S.W.I.M. Coalition

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

## Hutchinson River Raw Sewage Overflows

### **ACTION ALERT!**

### ***Hutchinson River's salt marsh habitat at risk.***

The Hutchinson River originates in Scarsdale, Westchester County, and flows through the Bronx to meet the East River. The Hutchinson River is home to the Thomas Pell Sanctuary, the second largest salt marsh habitat in New York City.

However the Hutchinson River is still plagued by ongoing pollution. Nearly every time it rains, raw sewage and polluted stormwater overflow from New York City's antiquated sewers. In a typical year, 323 million gallons of this "combined sewer overflow" (CSO) are dumped into the Hutchinson 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 2014, the City submitted the Hutchinson 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 (zero!), 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)			Cost	Anticipated Construction Completion
		Baseline*	Reduced in the LTCP	Volume w/ LTCP Implemented		
<b>Hutchinson River</b>	Extend an outfall pipe and add chlorination	323	0	323	\$90 M	2030

\*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.
- **Chlorination instead of CSO reduction:** The LTCP proposed **zero** CSO reduction and relies on chlorine disinfection to kill bacteria. The plan allows hundreds of millions of gallons of CSO to enter the River.
  - o DEP has not tested the technology to chlorinate at a CSO outfall – we don't know how much chlorine will end up in the waterways.
  - o Chlorine disinfection removes some, but not all, pathogens and creates chemical byproducts that could be harmful to human and ecological health.
- **Pollution from Westchester County ignored:** 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 and scientists questioning the public process and the proposed technology (chlorination).
  - o The approval of these plans was not publicly announced, but rather quietly posted on the City and State's websites.

## Help Protect this Habitat!



### **GET INVOLVED!**

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

#### **Councilman Andy King**

*(Wakefield, Olinville, Edenwald, Eastchester, Williamsbridge, Baychester, Co-op City)*  
718-684-5509

Andy.King@council.nyc.gov  
940 East Gun Hill Road  
Bronx, NY 10467

#### **Councilman James Vacca**

*(Allerton, City Island, Country Club, Edgewater Park, Ferry Point, Locust Point, Morris Park, Pelham Bay, Pelham Gardens, Schuylerville, Silver Beach, Spencer Estates, Throggs Neck, Van Nest, Waterbury LaSalle, Westchester Square, Zerega)*  
718-931-1721

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Bronx, NY 10461

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 **Hutchinson River Restoration Project** for local activities and actions:  
[www.hutchinsonriverrestorationproject.org](http://www.hutchinsonriverrestorationproject.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.

