

December 17, 2015

Dear Commissioner Lloyd,

As Queens residents and frequent park visitors, we are very concerned about sewage and other pollution in Alley Creek. We feel very strongly that the Long Term Control Plan under review does not adequately address the problems faced by the park and therefore fails to serve the park's many visitors, its surrounding communities, and the long-term health of a critical ecosystem.

On our recent visits to the environmental center and park, we were dismayed at the smell of sewage in the air. This is a place where children and families go to learn about the environment and the wildlife supported by one of the very few remaining estuary environments in New York City.

We believe that putting chlorine or other disinfectants into these waterways is not a real solution. It is both inadequate to the problem and introduces chemicals that are toxic to aquatic life into a very sensitive ecosystem that is a unique environmental and educational resource to New York residents.

In fact, based on the public presentation, it is clear that the source of the sewage is not just CSOs. It also comes from illicit sources that have not been comprehensively identified.

We question how any Long Term Control Plan can be finalized before these sources of pollution have been identified.

At a minimum the Long Term Control Plan should include clear steps, a timeline, and measurable attainment metrics for identification and elimination of these illicit sources, but it does not. Without a measurable and transparent plan, residents have every reason to fear that raw sewage will continue to contaminate the area, as will any chemical pollution that gets released.

We also feel that not enough has been done to inform the public about this issue. In fact, one of us-- Nicole--was at Alley Creek Environmental Center on November 16, 2015, the day before the Final Review public presentation. Despite actively searching all bulletin boards and walls in the center for information about Alley Creek, nothing about this public presentation was visible.

Where was this meeting publicized and what opportunities has the public had to learn about the issue? We only learned that the meeting had taken place when later researching water quality at the park.

For all of these reasons, we strongly urge you to reconsider this plan and put forward one that genuinely protects the long-term well-being of our parks and environment.

Sincerely,

Nicole Z. and David R.