

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS & REAL PROPERTY TAX SERVICES

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

January 24, 2025

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: TURNER, Geraci, Bean, Diamond, Gilligan, Etu and Strainer

- I. Committee meeting called to order by Chair
- II. Approval of minutes of prior Committee Meeting
- III. Privilege of the floor and public comment
- IV. Action Agenda/New Business Items:
 1. Request: To send a letter to NYSDEC requesting additional funding for the Septic Replacement Program.
Rationale: To seek additional funding to address the backlog of septic replacement applications from across Warren County.
 2. Request:
Rationale:
 3. Request:
Rationale:
- V. Discussion Items:
 - 1.
 - 2.
- VI. Referrals/Pending Items:
 - 1.
- VII. Privilege of the floor and public comment
- VIII. Motion to adjourn

Attachments: 1. Resolution request

RESOLUTION REQUEST FORM NO. 20

MISCELLANEOUS

****Please List All Other Requests Not Covered by Previous Resolution Request Forms Here.
Please attach any backup information available and be as detailed as possible.***

DEPARTMENT NAME: Planning

DATE: 1/8/2025

- (a) Purpose of Request:
To send a letter to NYSDEC requesting additional funding for the Septic Replacement Program

- (b) Details:
Draft letter expresses need for additional funding to address the backlog of septic replacement applications from across Warren County. The programs geography was expanded beyond Lake George in 2024 which has resulted in increased demand for the program.

- (c) Previous Resolution Number:
NA

- (d) Where are the Funds (if required)? List Budget Code, Object Code, Full Title* and Amount:
NA

Sample: A.8021 470 Planning & Community Development – Contract

* as listed in budget and LOGOS



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Kevin B. Geraghty, Chairman

Amanda Allen, Clerk of the Board

January 24, 2025

Sean Mahar, Interim Commissioner
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-1011

Re: Support for New Septic Replacement Program Funding

Dear Commissioner Mahar:

I am pleased to see that Governor Hochul has included the Safeguard the State's Water Resources initiative, which includes combatting Harmful Algal Blooms through grants for septic system replacements, in the State of the State. The New York State Septic System Replacement Program is important to protection of water quality in Warren County, and we support the Governor's call to include a new allocation of funding for the Septic System Replacement Program in the 2025 Budget.

Since 2021, Warren County has received \$1,375,000 from Environmental Facilities Corporation for the Septic Replacement Program. This funding has been used to support septic replacement projects along the shores of Lake George, and in 2024 the County worked with the Department of Environmental Conservation to expand the geographic eligibility to include dozens of sensitive lakes, rivers and streams across the county in both the Lake George, Lake Champlain, and Upper Hudson watersheds.

Warren County has deployed this money enthusiastically, expediently, and effectively. Our application process is easy to use by residents and efficient. However, our demand is several times more than the funds we receive and expect that gap to increase under Lake George's on-going septic system inspection program. Specifically, we have already allocated all of the \$400,000 in 2024 award and have a waiting list of 60 applications for additional EFC funds. Additionally, we have an additional 39 applications for projects that do not meet EFC program guidelines. Warren County needs a higher allocation in need in 2025 and requests \$1.5 million in funding to ensure that we can continue to run our septic replacement program.

In addition, Warren County is in the process of developing our first ever comprehensive plan, and we conducted extensive public surveying to gauge interest in what residents' priorities and values are. Unsurprisingly **environmental quality** was named as a top reason for people to live here and **environmental protection** was

named as a top priority for Warren County government. A priority action under the goal of maintaining environmental quality is to **'continue and expand support for private septic system replacement programs.'**

As a testament to Warren County's commitment to improving and protecting water quality we have pursued and secured additional sources of funding for septic replacements. In 2024 we received \$400,000 from the Community Development Block Grant Program to replace septic systems for low- and moderate-income residents and an additional \$110,000 from the Lake Champlain Basin Program/Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board to offset the administrative cost of running the NYSDEC Septic Replacement Program (\$60,000) and implement an additional 5 septic replacements (\$50,000).

As noted above, in 2023 the Lake George Park Commission established a mandatory septic inspection program for properties near Lake George that will supersede existing proactive inspection programs by our local municipalities. The 2023 annual report from the Lake George Park Commission revealed that a significant portion of septic systems were not performing as they should and that the combined unsatisfactory and fail rate when combined was close to 50%. This far exceeded the anticipated 20% fail rate that was assumed when the mandatory inspection policy was developed. This means that the issue of underperforming septic systems along the shores of Lake George is even larger than anticipated and additional resources are required to address the number of systems in need of repair. With the program's area of eligibility expanded to new waterways we anticipate a similarly high septic failure rate across Warren County. Again, to address these need we request an additional \$1,500,000 be allocated to Warren County in 2025 which will help ensure the Adirondacks can receive its fair share of the statewide funds the Governor has committed to put in this year's state budget.

Please contact Ethan Gaddy at gaddye@warrencountyny.gov if you have any specific questions regarding the details of Warren County's septic policies and programs. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Nancy Turner, Chair
Warren County Environmental Concerns Committee

cc: Senator Daniel Stec
Assemblymember Matthew Simpson
Carol Lamb-Lafay, NYSDEC Water Division
David Miller, Adirondack Council