

Dear Fellow Villagers,

I wanted to make sure that you had seen the following Guest Editorial in the Citizen from Senator Helming and Assemblyman Finch. They have been working with and for us on this issue for several years and have pledged to continue until Aurora's water needs are resolved. I'm sure you join me in thanking them for their involvement.

Guest column: Residents of Aurora need safe, affordable water

By Senator Pam Helming and Assemblyman Gary Finch
AuburnPub.com

The Village of Aurora and virtually all of our local communities face issues with aging infrastructure. This has been compounded in the Village of Aurora because it relies on an aging water treatment plant owned and operated by Wells College. For several years now, a cloud of uncertainty has hung over the future of this nearly 100+ year old plant.

Recently, we participated in a meeting with various government agencies, stakeholders, and other elected officials regarding the Village of Aurora's current water infrastructure dilemma as well as future water plans. This was an important opportunity for everyone to come together and explore what needs to be done to ensure access to safe and affordable water now and in the future. It is also an opportunity to explore bringing water to surrounding communities and towns outside of the Village of Aurora, helping to attract jobs and new opportunities that will benefit the entire county.

This is not a new issue, but for the first time, we were able to bring all of the key decision makers to the table, including Cayuga County. This is key because no major improvements can be made without Cayuga County's involvement.

In 2018, at the state level, we were able to secure \$500,000 to purchase new specialized water filters the Village of Aurora/Wells College water plant required to combat harmful algal blooms. Also, in 2018, we were able to secure an additional \$100,000 for the

Village of Aurora to purchase two new highway trucks. This funding helped offset expenditures in the Village budget which allowed the Village to conduct a feasibility study to help develop possible solutions for alternate water plant locations along Cayuga Lake, and the possible replacement of their antiquated plant.

Improving this system will require the County and the Village to work collectively. It is no secret that upgrades to our sewer and water systems are necessary and critical to protect public health and to avoid public health emergencies. Additionally, without adequate water infrastructure, we will see economic development and job creation dry up. This is about both the safety and future of our community.

The Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority will be a key partner in finding a permanent solution to this issue and has requested \$150,000 in funding from the Cayuga County Legislature to produce a Map Plan and Report that examines the implementation of water improvements.

Proper planning is key in the effort to find the most cost-effective solution to the community's critical water infrastructure needs. According to the Authority, the data provided in this Map Plan Report is necessary to apply for any available state and federal funding opportunities. This funding request is currently under consideration by the County Legislature.

It is critical the county complete the Map Plan Report so local and county officials can provide clear direction, and so the best decisions can be made on how to proceed. The Village of Aurora needs to move forward with water system solutions and plans, and the study, once funded, will provide a clearer picture for local taxpayers, county leaders and state representatives.

It is a privilege to serve as your state representatives and you can be assured that we will continue to work with our partners at every level of government to advocate on behalf of the Village of Aurora and its residents.