

Letter: Appropriate debate on water law

March 14, 2014



It is unfortunate that columnist Michael Dobie elected to disparage critics of the proposed Long Island Water Pollution Control Act legislation ["Critics make waves over water bill," March 9, 2014].

At a recent Long Island Regional Planning Council meeting, speakers expressed opposition to the proposed bill. Neither the environmental advocates, who drafted the bill, nor the sponsors -- State Assemb. Robert Sweeney (D-Lindenhurst) and State Sen. Kenneth LaValle (R-Port Jefferson) -- availed themselves of the technical expertise of the

scientists and engineers in the professional environmental community. That could explain why the bill is not grounded in sound scientific principles.

One example of myriad deficiencies in the bill is projecting nitrogen standards for drinking water into a marine environment.

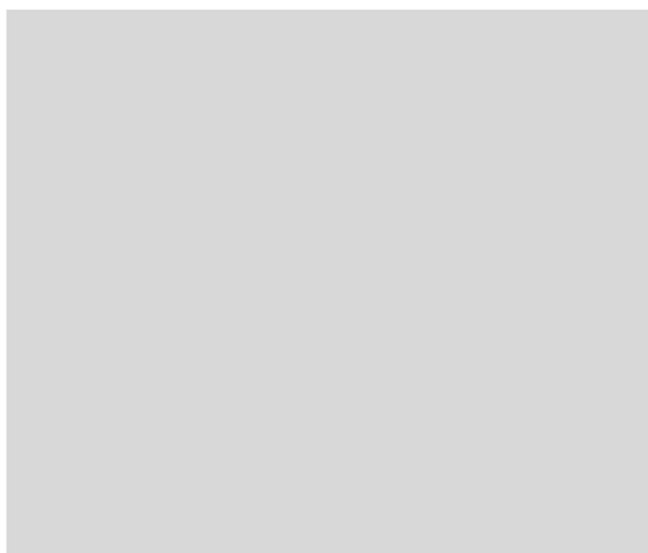
Other vocal opponents of the bill included town and village elected officials who are concerned that the legislation would permit an unelected panel to trump local zoning.

Dobie argued that the bill was being revised, and therefore it was counterproductive to hold a public forum. Before our meeting, I was told by Senate majority co-leader Dean Skelos' office that because the bill had been introduced into committee, it was appropriate to receive comments.

With 70 percent of Suffolk County unsewered, and pollution abounding in our ground and surface waters, what Long Island should be focused on instead of more regulation is developing strategies to fund sewers, upgrade treatment plants, clean up brownfields and restrict chemical use.

John D. Cameron Jr., Rockville Centre

Editor's note: *The writer is the chairman of the Long Island Regional Planning Council.*



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