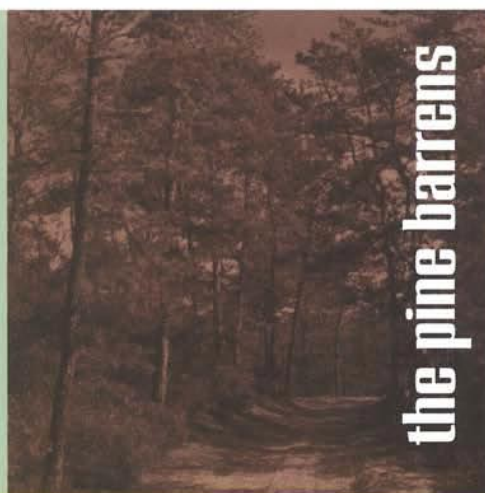




LONG ISLAND  
PINE BARRENS  
SOCIETY



the pine barrens

today

PROTECTING LAND & WATER

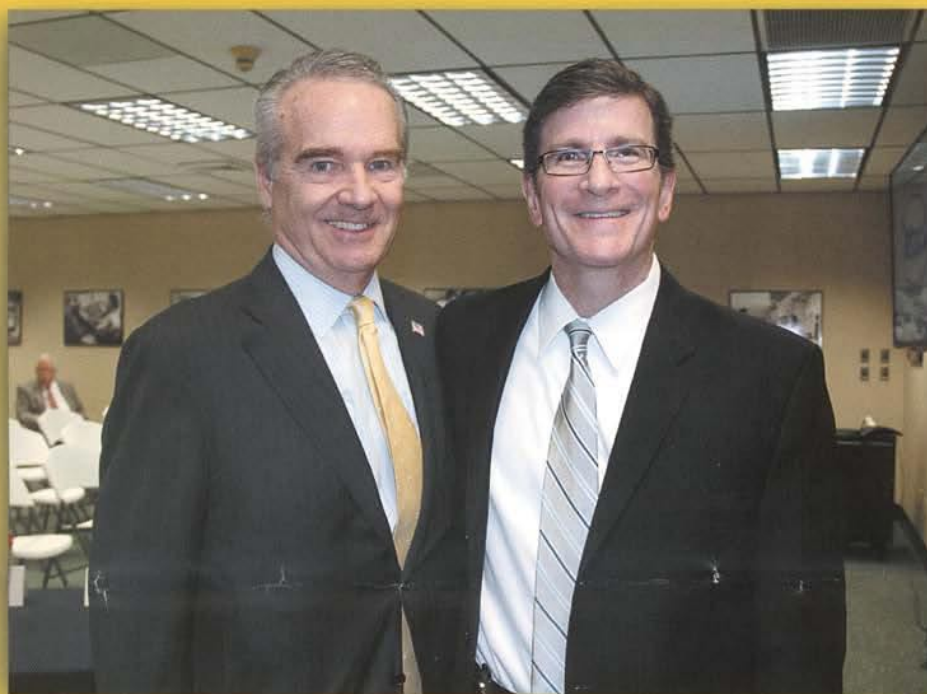
## Water Quality Plan Launched

# Nitrogen Reduction Strategy Underway

A program aimed at reversing the decline in water quality Island-wide, by targeting nitrogen from wastewater and fertilizers, is underway. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Long Island Regional Planning Council have commenced a three-part program, supported by Suffolk and Nassau Counties and several Long Island towns.

Funded by New York State at \$5 million for the first year, the program calls for identifying each of the Island's individual watersheds, measuring the current nitrogen loading, then producing a custom, science-based Nitrogen Reduction Plan for each watershed. A second \$5 million is being sought in the 2016 state budget.

Launched in October, the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan is aimed at reducing nitrogen discharge from sewage treatment plants, individual septic systems and cesspools and fertilizers associated with agricul-



**PARTNERS IN WATER PROTECTION:** John Cameron, Chairman of the Long Island Regional Planning Council and James Tierney, Assistant Commissioner for Water at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation are spearheading a Nitrogen Action Plan to clean-up Long Island's water.

ture and landscaping. The nitrogen seeps into groundwater and flows into our surface waters, degrading drinking water and triggering harmful algae blooms that kill marine life and aquatic plants, closing beaches and shellfisheries.

Credit: LIPBS

At the same time, Suffolk County has launched a spate of initiatives, including testing new wastewater management systems in individual homes in an effort to replace some 350,000 home cesspools and septic systems over the next decade. These antiquated systems, discharge human waste directly into groundwater causing significant nitrogen contamination. Results of the testing are expected by summer and the approval of these advanced systems for widespread use is expected later in 2016.

Future water improvement efforts will include the reduction of pesticides and herbicides, clean-up of toxic waste sites and elimination of pharmaceutical drugs from groundwater through improper disposal. "We know exactly what is responsible for

declining water quality on Long Island," said Pine Barrens Society Executive Director, Richard Amper, "now, we've begun the process of cleaning up the mess."