

# TOWNS WILL MEET, TALK WASTE PLANS

## Suffolk looking ahead as landfill preps for closure

BY CARL MACGOWAN  
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Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine said Wednesday he would convene a meeting of the county's 10 towns to begin discussing plans for a regional solid waste program to prepare for the closure of the Brookhaven landfill.

Speaking at a Stony Brook University environmental symposium, Romaine warned the landfill closure, expected by early 2028, would have a ripple effect across Long Island as contractors and municipalities ship more waste to out-of-state landfills — boosting construction costs and taxes.

Romaine, who was Brookhaven supervisor before rising to the county post in January, said Suffolk and town officials must work collectively to improve recycling programs and cut the cost of waste disposal.

"Every one of the garbage issues has an impact on the economy of Long Island," Romaine told about 70 public officials, waste industry executives, academics and environmental ad-

vocates at the annual gathering. "The future is going to be here before we know it."

Romaine and other town supervisors discussed similar challenges at last year's Stony Brook symposium and agreed that expanding opportunities to sell recyclable trash and finding new uses for glass are key to solving Long Island's solid waste crisis.

Brookhaven Supervisor Dan Panico said in January the landfill would start closing on Dec. 31, when it no longer takes construction and demolition debris from private carters. It will close completely in 2027 or early 2028, when the landfill is expected to run out of capacity for ash from incinerators in Westbury, Huntington and Ronkonkoma.

Romaine's plan received support from several people at the symposium.

Adrienne Esposito, executive director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment in Farmingdale, said a regional system would be better for taxpayers.

"The current system is so fractured and it was never really created for an island where 3 million people live. Also, we have a waste stream now that we need to update," she said in an interview.

Romaine did not say when he



The future of waste management in Suffolk was discussed at Stony Brook University on Wednesday.

## WHAT TO KNOW

- **Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine** on Wednesday said he would convene a meeting of the county's 10 towns to discuss a regional solid waste management plan.
- **Romaine, former Brookhaven Town supervisor**, said the county and towns must prepare for the closure of the Brookhaven landfill.
- **Backers of the plan said it would be better** for taxpayers and make it easier to attract businesses that would use recycled products as manufacturing material.

plans to meet with town leaders but mentioned Earth Day, April 22, as a possible date.

He said he would consider inviting Nassau County to take part in a regional plan if County Executive Bruce Blake-

man is interested.

Romaine did not outline specific plans but said Suffolk's current waste management system is hobbled because the 10 towns each have their own waste disposal and recycling systems. That leads to confusion and inefficiency, Romaine said.

Closing the landfill should encourage municipalities to improve recycling programs that suffer from low participation among residents and a lack of markets for products such as glass, Romaine said. Operating a single regional system would attract private development of manufacturing plants that use recycled plastics and other material, he said.

"We need an economy where waste works for us rather than against us," he said.

John Cameron, a Woodbury engineer who chairs the Long Island Regional Planning Council, agreed potential investors are turned off by trash and recycling systems that vary from town to town.

"Unfortunately, without uniformity, there's no incentive for a private vendor to come here and build a factory and make it operational," he said at the conference. "Anything we do here, if we're not doing it efficiently, it's going to add to our tax burden."

Romaine said his plan would receive a boost if proposed waste transfer stations in Yaphank and Kings Park are approved by the federal Surface Transportation Board.

But Georgette Grier-Key, president of the Brookhaven NAACP, said the transfer stations are unnecessary and would disproportionately affect minority residents in nearby communities. She has called for the landfill to be closed immediately.

A lawsuit filed by the NAACP that sought to block the Yaphank project was thrown out in January by a state Supreme Court judge.

"I'm paying for this landfill with my life," Grier-Key said at the conference.

# DA: LI woman stole \$440G from parents

BY MICHAEL O'KEEFFE  
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A Farmingville woman charged in an indictment with second-degree grand larceny stole more than \$440,000 from her elderly parents, Suffolk District Attorney Ray Tierney said Wednesday, and used the

money to gamble at Jake's 58 casino in Islandia.

Supreme Court Justice Richard Ambro released Elizabeth M. Motti, 55, on her own recognizance Wednesday during an arraignment in Riverhead, Tierney said in a news release. She was ordered to return to court on April 18.

Motti was represented at the arraignment by the Legal Aid Society of Suffolk County, which declined to comment on the case.

Motti became her mother's caregiver after her mother underwent surgery and her parents moved in with her. An investigation determined Motti al-

legedly stole \$440,063 from her parents between April 2017 and November 2018, Tierney said.

Most of the money — \$355,046 — was allegedly stolen from her parents' bank accounts by using debit cards at ATMs at Jake's 58. Motti obtained the remaining \$85,017 by making cash withdrawals from

her parents' accounts, Tierney said.

"Our elder community is at increased risk for fraud and theft," Tierney said. "We want to place those who choose to exploit our vulnerable populations on notice that if you are caught, you will be held accountable."