

Innovative/Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Maintenance

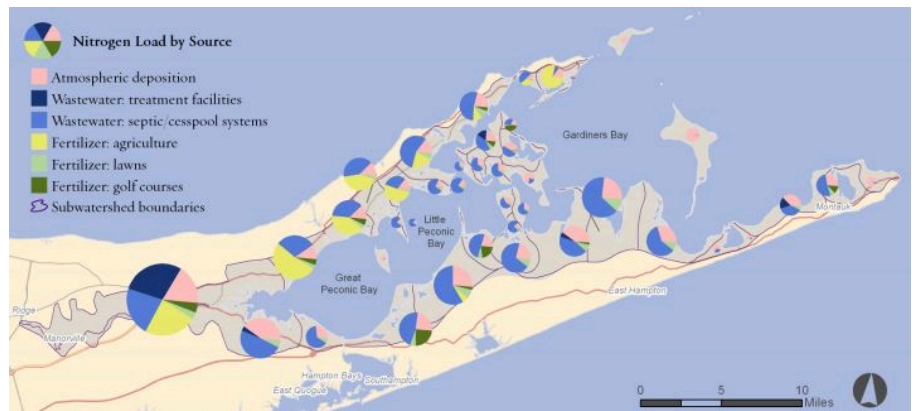
PEP is allocating \$50,000 of IJA Funds towards an additional three years of maintenance.

Nitrogen Pollution

Excess nitrogen from human activities can cause detrimental impacts such as coastal acidification, harmful algal blooms (HABs), low levels of dissolved oxygen in the water, and loss of critical eelgrass and wetland habitats. Over the past two decades, nitrogen pollution has become recognized as one of the greatest threats to the Peconic Estuary due to its far-reaching impacts.

Nitrogen pollution from cesspools and septic systems has been identified as the largest single cause of degraded water quality contributing to beach closures, restrictions on shellfishing, toxic algae blooms, and massive fish kills. When nitrogen reaches surface waters it contributes to the degradation of our marshes, bays, and beaches.

Thousands of parcels are currently served by polluting cesspools and septic systems, but will never connect to a sewer system due to funding constraints and environmental concerns. Reversing the degradation of water quality will depend on the replacement of existing systems with new, individual Innovative, and Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (I/A OWTS).



Suffolk County's Reclaim Our Water - Septic Improvement Program

Suffolk County has launched the [Reclaim Our Water](#) initiative to regulate the use of I/A OWTS to ensure these advanced wastewater treatment systems continue to reduce nitrogen as they are designed to do. To make the cost of I/A systems more affordable for homeowners, Suffolk County has developed the Septic Improvement Program (SIP).

Under the SIP, homeowners who decide to replace their cesspool or septic system with the new I/A OWTS technologies may be eligible for grants from New York State and Suffolk County toward the purchase and installation of a nitrogen removal septic system and leaching structure. This funding enables homeowners to replace aging and failing cesspools with state-of-the-art technologies that significantly improve treatment, extend system life, and enhance safety.

The average total cost for nitrogen-removing I/A systems is approximately \$25,000.00, plus the cost of attendant engineering and design services. Costs vary on a case-by-case basis. Grant funding available through Suffolk County and New York State can cover up to \$30,000 towards a project.

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The first three years are covered as part of the manufacturer's warranty. However, homeowners will need to sign yearly maintenance contracts and will be responsible for maintenance costs after the three-year warranty expires. It is anticipated that O&M will cost approximately \$300 a year. PEP is allocating \$50,000 of IJA Funds towards an additional three years of maintenance costs.

CCMP Action

Action 18: Implement science-based approaches for monitoring and reducing nutrient pollution

Status

In Process

Suffolk County Legislature has formally accepted IJA funds awarded.

Suffolk County Department of Health has moved to create the grant program.

Secured Funding:

PEP Investments in Infrastructure and Jobs Act Y2 Funds: \$50,000

\$45,000 Additional PEP EPA Funds**

Partners

Suffolk County Department of Health Services

Resources

- [Suffolk County Septic Improvement Program](https://reclaimourwater.info/Septic-Improvement-Program)
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