



Mayors, Supervisors and Board or Council members of the following municipalities bordering the Pocantico River, Rondout Creek, Sparkill Creek and Wallkill River:

Village of Briarcliff Manor	Town of Mount Pleasant	Village of Sleepy Hollow
Town of Esopus	Town of New Castle	Town of Ulster
Town of Gardiner	Town of New Paltz	Town of Walden
Town of Goshen	Village of New Paltz	Village of Walden
Town of Hamptonburgh	Town of Orangetown	Town of Warwick
Town of Marbletown	Town of Ossining	Town of Wawarsing
Town of Minisink	Town of Rochester	Town of Wawayanda
Town of Montgomery	Town of Rosendale	
Village of Montgomery	Town of Shawangunk	

June 2, 2016

Dear municipal leader,

I am writing to alert you to news that should help your municipality gain access to additional state grants and/or loans to support wastewater infrastructure projects. We have advocated for three key changes that will give projects in your municipality higher scores on applications for state grants and loans, putting you in position to take advantage of greatly expanded state investments in wastewater infrastructure. These investments are critical for restoring water quality in the creeks and rivers in the Hudson River Watershed.

1. There is significantly more money in the state budget for water and wastewater projects, thanks to concerted advocacy by Riverkeeper and a coalition of more than three dozen organizations representing many different interests, including the Association of Towns of the State of New York, New York Conference of Mayors and New York Association of Counties. The Governor and Legislature increased by \$100 million (to \$175 million) the amount available this year for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure grants via the NYS Water Infrastructure Improvement Act (NYSWIIA). Currently in its second year, the Governor and Legislature have committed \$400 million to this program over three years. These grants can pay up to 25% of a project's cost, up to \$5 million, and they are typically paired with low- or no-interest loans.

The Governor and Legislature also funded the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) at \$300 million. The EPF included increased funding for Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP), which provides grants for wastewater or stormwater projects. Nearly \$26 million is available in WQIP grants in this round.

2. The NYSWIIA grants for wastewater no longer have a hardship eligibility requirement. Several communities in the Hudson Valley have median household incomes high enough to make them ineligible for the first round of NYSWIIA funding in 2015. All communities are now eligible.

3. Your municipality's applications for NYSWIIA, WQIP, as well as Clean Water State Revolving Fund loans and Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering Planning Grants (EPG), should receive higher scores than in the past. This is because the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) [Waterbody Inventories/Priority Waterbodies List \(WI/PWL\) all or parts of the Rondout Creek, Wallkill River, Pocantico River and Sparkill Creek have been updated](#) based on the data Riverkeeper gathered with partners (including, in some cases, members of your environmental advisory councils) as part of our ongoing community science water quality monitoring projects. These changes should significantly affect the scoring of your applications for state grants and loans related to wastewater, since key factors in determining priority are the quality of the receiving waters (as defined by the WI/PWL) and the degree to which your project will improve conditions. This is particularly important because these grant and loan programs are highly competitive.

In addition to affecting new applications, you should update information with NYS Environmental Facilities Corp. (EFC) about any existing projects your municipality has listed on the Intended Use Plan, as your scores should increase.

Now is the time to prepare for future applications. If you have not completed engineering plans for a project, then you should consider applying for Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering Planning Grant (EPG) so you will be in a position to take advantage of these funding sources next year. This year, \$2 million in EPG grant funding is available for communities with median household incomes of under \$65,000, with grant awards of \$30,000 to \$100,000 depending on the project. The deadline for submitting engineering reports for the 2017 Intended Use Plan for the CWSRF is in August 2016.

Key deadlines are fast approaching. The deadline for NYSWIIA grant applications is June 20.

WQIP and EPG grants are part of the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA), and the deadline for CFA applications is July 29. There are other potential sources of wastewater funding in the CFA, including Community Development Block Grants, and Green Innovation Grant Program.

I hope you find this information, and the advocacy that led to these developments, useful. Please let me know if I can help explain any of these points more fully. You may reach me at dshapley@riverkeeper.org or 914-478-4501 x226.

If you have questions about any aspect of state grant or loan funding for wastewater projects, I encourage you to visit www.efc.ny.gov and contact Dwight A. Brown, SRF Services Coordinator for NYS EFC, at dwight.brown@efc.ny.gov or 518.402.7396.

We hope your community takes advantage of these opportunities to improve water quality where we boat, swim and fish.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Shapley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dan Shapley
Water Quality Program Manager

P.S. Note that the updates to the WI/PWL do not carry any new regulatory burdens for your municipality.

CC: County planning and/or wastewater agencies in Westchester, Rockland, Orange and Ulster counties;
Dwight Brown, EFC; Jeff Myers, DEC; conservation advisory groups and watershed groups