

1 **2024 NYSAC Fall Seminar**
2 **Standing Committee on Public Health/Mental Health**
3 **Resolution #4**

4
5 **Calling on New York State to Protect the Public Water Supply from Harmful**
6 **Contaminants by Increasing Funding for County Drinking Water**
7 **Enhancement Grants**
8

9 **WHEREAS**, of the 58 local health departments (LHDs) in New York State, 36 provide
10 environmental health services in their communities; and

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12 **WHEREAS**, these full-service LHDs conduct oversight and monitoring activities and
13 provide technical assistance to assure that public water supply operations achieve and
14 maintain compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations; and

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16 **WHEREAS** environmental activities led by counties include carrying out sanitary
17 surveys, providing notice and reminders to public water supply operators regarding
18 testing and reporting requirements, creating annual sampling schedules prepared
19 through New York’s Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS), and monitoring
20 to assure that testing is performed at the appropriate times throughout the year; and

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22 **WHEREAS**, environmental health staff employed at full-service LHDs work hard to
23 ensure the quality of drinking water and routinely face emerging issues that pose
24 significant threats to water quality, including road salt contamination, the emergence of
25 unregulated chemicals in drinking water, water main breaks and infrastructure damage,
26 extreme weather conditions, agricultural impacts, and harmful algae blooms; and

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28 **WHEREAS**, in the face of these threats to our drinking water, LHDs continue to face
29 ongoing resource limitations that undermine their capacity to respond, and the 2
30 percent New York State property tax cap constrains local government budgets; and

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32 **WHEREAS**, when coupled with stagnant state funding, the result is that local health
33 departments too often struggle to maintain current programs, much less enhance their
34 ability to respond to the growing challenges of providing safe water for drinking and
35 recreation; and

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37 **WHEREAS**, local health departments must ensure public water systems are
38 monitoring for over 100 contaminants to provide public notification of exceedances, as
39 well as develop a course of action and timetable to reduce the contaminant(s) below
40 maximum levels; and

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42 **WHEREAS**, the identification and addition of new maximum contaminant levels
43 (MCLs) for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and other emerging
44 contaminants have increased the strain on resources and threaten to erode our already
45 limited capacity to maintain other critical public health services; and

1 **WHEREAS**, while New York State has made significant fiscal and programmatic
2 enhancements to assist municipalities in protecting drinking water, the same cannot be
3 said for support for the county-level role of monitoring and regulation of drinking water
4 supplies; and

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6 **WHEREAS**, New York State invested \$2.5 billion in Clean Water Infrastructure and
7 Water Quality Protection in 2017-2018 SFY, and with annual appropriations of
8 \$500,000,000 since that time; while LHDs have been held to flat Drinking Water
9 Enhancement funding and are required to review all water improvement projects and
10 offer approval for safe installation for the communities they serve; and

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12 **WHEREAS**, the annual investment for Drinking Water Enhancement grants is only 1
13 percent of the entire appropriation for Clean Water Infrastructure and Water Quality
14 Protection; and

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16 **WHEREAS**, the original appropriation for Drinking Water Enhancement grants was
17 \$6 million; however, between SFY 2009-10 and SFY 2013-14, the grants were cut by a
18 cumulative 16 percent and have not increased since 2013-14 despite growing public
19 health needs and mandates.

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21 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the New York State Association of
22 Counties (NYSAC) calls on the Governor and Legislature take the following actions in
23 the coming fiscal year to protect and enhance public water supply:

- 24
25 1. Increase drinking water enhancement grant funding; and
26 2. Recognize the impact the last several years of funding constraints on the state
27 and local agencies responsible for ensuring the quality of our drinking water; and
28 3. Adopt policies to strengthen and facilitate partnerships across state agencies and
29 between the state and local government entities that share primary responsibility
30 for ensuring access to safe drinking water; and

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32 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, copies of this resolution be sent to the counties of
33 New York state encouraging member counties to enact similar resolutions; and

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35 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NYSAC shall forward copies of this resolution to
36 Governor Kathy Hochul, the New York State Legislature and all others deemed
37 necessary and proper.