



Riverkeeper · NRDC · Stormwater Infrastructure Matters

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Support - A9445-A/S8857-A (Gallagher/Comrie)

Riverkeeper, NRDC, and the SWIM Coalition strongly support A9445-A/S8857-A, amending the New York State Local Water Authority and Sewer Act to affirm local authority to restructure sewerage fees based on stormwater management costs to incentivize flooding reductions and adoption of green infrastructure. The legislation confirms the existing powers of Water Boards to utilize water fee restructuring as a potential tool to fund, incentivize and implement projects to reduce stormwater runoff and potentially provide rate payers with a more equitable rate structure. This legislation does not require action by local Water Boards nor mandate them to assess or otherwise restructure water rates.

Ithaca has successfully implemented a stormwater rate structure, following the lead of cities nationwide, such as Philadelphia and Baltimore, separating stormwater charges from potable water and wastewater charges. Approximately 800 cities around the U.S. already use, or are phasing-in, a parcel-based billing approach with credits available for retrofits. Such rate structures ensure owners of large impervious properties that generate significant volumes of stormwater pay their fair share for managing stormwater, maintaining the sewer system and cleaning up local waterways.

Key Features of this legislation:

- **No requirement for rate restructuring**, just clear, plain language confirming authority for localities to make local choices
- 100 percent of stormwater fees collected must go towards stormwater management, including green infrastructure such as rain gardens, permeable pavement, stormwater collection and treatment
- As climate change intensifies with rising sea levels and an increase in heavy rain events, this legislation would provide an additional tool for communities to raise revenue to address local flooding and improve water quality
- **A separate stormwater fee can reduce costs for homeowners and owners of multifamily buildings**
- Grant programs and rate discounts embedded in rate restructuring, if a locality chooses, can offset potential costs to property owners impacted by new stormwater fees