

LEGISLATURE BANS BOTTLED WATER, SAVES MONEY, CUTS FUEL USE, LITTER

Departments Will Use Tap Water and the Environment Benefits

HAUPPAUGE, NY, MARCH 19, 2007 – In an effort to cut pollution, limit litter, save money, and reduce greenhouse gasses, the Suffolk County Legislature has prohibited the purchase of plastic single-serving water bottles by county departments. The legislation was proposed by Legislator Vivian Viloría-Fisher and gained the approval of the Legislature at its meeting Tuesday, March 18.

Legislator Viloría-Fisher pointed out that huge amounts of oil are used to create plastic bottles and an enormous amount of greenhouse gasses are released during their manufacture. Also, only a small fraction of plastic water containers are recycled, and they either end up in incinerators or littering roads and parks all across Suffolk County.

“The ban on Suffolk County's purchase of bottled water is another step in the protection of our environment,” said Legislator Viloría-Fisher.

Legislator Viloría-Fisher also pointed out that bottled water costs in excess of 1,000 times the price of Suffolk County Water Authority tap water, water which is regularly rated among the best in the entire country. Neal Lewis of the Neighborhood Network testified in support of the bill, and noted that quality standards for tap water are more restrictive than those for bottled water. He also pointed out the energy costs to create the bottles, fill them, transport them, and recover, recycle and/or dispose of them amount to filling each bottle one-quarter full of oil.

The law does not apply to single serving bottled water if purchased as part of an underlying contract with a vending machine distributor or supplier. The Suffolk County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services is exempt, and the Department of Health Services is authorized to issue a waiver from the law if testing reveals that any public water supplied to a County building is unsafe for human consumption.

For additional information contact: Legislator Vivian Viloría-Fisher at 631-854-1650

###

Terrence Pearsall
Chief of Staff
Office of the Presiding Officer
Suffolk County Legislature
(631)853-4088 Fax: (631)853-4071