



PASCACK VALLEY MAYORS' ASSOCIATION

August 8, 2022

Mr. William Pikolycky
President
New Jersey League of Municipalities
222 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08608

Dear Mr. Pikolycky,

The Pascack Valley Mayor's Association is requesting the League's formal endorsement of S-790 and its companion, A4200. The proposed legislation would impart a flood mitigation duty upon all water management facilities throughout the state.

Many water providers are currently exempt from this duty and therefore it is given no consideration in how the water is managed within their reservoirs and under their control. They are only responsible for maximizing the asset, which is released during storms to protect the structural integrity of the dams. This omission has caused local flooding, property damage and psychological trauma, as residents and businesses weather an increasing number of rain events – due to Climate Change.

There are 709 reservoirs in NJ. Some number of them will flood downstream properties, as we, in the Pascack Valley, are experiencing. Unlike coastal flooding that storms like Sandy will generate, fluvial (river) flooding is particularly susceptible to runoff and sediment accumulation over time. Add in a reactionary, rather than a preemptive, release of water from an upstream reservoir and the situation can quickly move from bad to worse.

Releasing water during storms, while necessary to prevent the structural failure of the dams, contributes to bank erosion and shoal formation by repeatedly sending swift water into the long-neglected creeks and brooks. That standard operating procedure is surely impacting flora and fauna ecosystems both above and below the water surface. This is a statewide issue, experienced by our constituents.

Overdevelopment in northern Bergen County along the Pascack Valley drainage reservoir basin has exacerbated runoff. Even seemingly modest rainfall amounts can cause our low-lying creeks and brooks to crest their banks. Climate change is causing more frequent and intense rain events, more water entering and more quickly spilling over the brimming reservoirs, resulting in repetitive flooding. The capacity of these channels has been greatly diminished by a half century accumulation of silt and deadfall.

Regulatory restrictions, securing access to private property, testing, removing, hauling and dumping costs all coalesce to undermine the ability of individual towns to remove shoals and maintain flow through these waterways. These brooks and streams that carry the water provide multi-billion dollars asset flows between facilities; and yet the utilities bear no responsibility for the maintenance of these transmission routes. Instead, the current standard operating procedures under which they operate degrade the channels and the quality of the

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State's drinking water. With every flood more pollutants are deposited into the ecosystem and into the water supply chain.

We understand the complexity of the issue and the hierarchy of competing public goods. Water is essential to life and it must be safeguarded. Protecting the natural environment is an important part of that endeavor.

Requiring the providers to manage their asset responsibly by requiring feasible flood mitigation protocols that can reduce (not eliminate) the growing number of flood threats is consistent with, and will not impair, the vendors' principal mission. In addition to mitigating flood damage, reducing the frequency of swift water flows from dam releases during storms will diminish their adverse ecological impacts, thereby enhancing a public good.

We hope you will see the both the necessity and the urgency for enacting S-790 and A-4200.

We respectfully request that the League formally endorse them. Our Association members are available to discuss this matter further and answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Terry Maguire
Executive Director
Pascack Valley Mayor's Association

Danielle DePaola Mayor, Emerson	John Ruocco Mayor, Hillsdale	Michael Ghassali Mayor, Montvale	John M. Kramer Mayor, Old Tappan
Dianne Didio Mayor, Oradell	Keith Misciagna Mayor, Park Ridge	Glen Jasionowski Mayor, River Vale	Peter Calamari Mayor, Twp. Of Washington
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