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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Facing Staggering Clean Water Repair Costs, Unlikely Coalition Calls for \$800 Million in State Public Works Grants and Assistance** *Municipal Officials Join Construction Industry, Organized Labor and Environmental Groups*

MAMARONECK, NY– (**November 16, 2016**) —Joining an unlikely coalition of construction executives, union officials and conservationists, a group of local municipal officials and state lawmakers gathered today at Hommocks Conservation area in Mamaroneck to focus attention on the critically needed clean water infrastructure projects in Mamaroneck, New Rochelle and surrounding communities.

“Projects discussed not only included needed upgrades to wastewater and drinking water facilities, but the very underground infrastructure of pipes and culverts that are currently crumbling beneath our feet,” said Nancy Seligson, Supervisor of the Town of Mamaroneck. “Aging infrastructure is a crisis not just here in the Sound Shore area but throughout the county, state and nation,” she added.

These projects, which in many cases will cost millions of dollars, cannot be fully funded by the municipalities on their own, the group explained. The projects are vital to ensuring that wastewater is properly treated and managed in order to protect streams, rivers and Long Island Sound.

At the news conference, it was pointed out that the fragile conservation area along Hommocks Road itself could be threatened by overflow. The group commended New York State for current investments made to date under the Clean Water grants program, but the local officials and broader coalition at the event called on New York State to re-authorize and increase funding to its successful statewide Clean Water Grants program as part of the 2017-18 NYS budget.

“The success of the clean water infrastructure grant program in its first two years underscores the enormous need for state funds to make critical water quality projects affordable for local governments and taxpayers,” said Assemblyman Steve Otis, who helped initiate the program in the State Assembly. “With the strong support of Governor Cuomo and Assembly Speaker Heastie we have already enabled over \$1 billion in water projects to move forward. We need to continue to increase and expand this vital program, which creates jobs, cleans our environment and lowers property taxes.”

“With the enactment of the Water Infrastructure Improvement Fund in 2015, and the funding commitment our state has put into it, we are taking major steps forward. But the work to be done is

great, and a greater financial commitment is needed, to make sure that our families and businesses can get the high quality water they need," State Senator George Latimer said.

Findings from the recently released report on Clean Water Infrastructure Needs for Communities in Westchester and the Hudson Valley published by the Construction Industry Council of Westchester & Hudson Valley (CIC) and the Construction Advancement Institute of Westchester & Mid-Hudson, Inc. (CAI) emphasized the even greater needs region-wide. The report, "Clean Water Infrastructure Needs for Communities in Westchester County and the Hudson Valley," identified nearly \$1 billion of public works projects needed to control pollution and protect drinking water in the region. Of that need, the report documented \$250 million in "ready to go" clean water projects. Long-term statewide clean water infrastructure needs remain in the tens of billions of dollars.

The Clean Water Jobs Coalition, which endorsed the report, launched its *Invest in Clean Water/Invest in Jobs* campaign that calls upon the governor and the State Legislature to add \$800 million to its fiscal year 2017-2018 budget that begins April 1, 2017. "Now is the time to allocate more public resources for the health and safety of our cities, towns and villages," the report urged.

"These Clean Water funds are vital to the environmental and economic well-being of our region," said Ross J. Pepe, president of the CIC and executive director of the CAI. "Our findings demonstrate that communities cannot do it alone and need the support of New York State to meet this challenge. It is vital that communities in our region take advantage of and apply for funds under these programs and work together with us to advocate for the program's continuation and the allocations of more funds."

"For the past 25 years, Organized Labor has been at the forefront of the call to repair and upgrade our clean water and wastewater public works facilities in the region," said Edward Doyle, President of the Building & Construction Trades Council of Westchester & Putnam, Inc. "From Yonkers to Peekskill, from New Rochelle to Port Chester – and everywhere in between – the men and the women of the Building Trades have proven that we have the skills and expertise, the dedication and the capacity to get these jobs done. These projects provide lasting value to communities long after the work is completed. So let's get to work and make this happen. We need to invest in clean water – we need to invest in jobs – we need to make sure Albany puts \$800 million into the clean water grants fund for New York State next year."

"The Business Council of Westchester strongly supports New York State's clean water grant funding for our communities which will assure the county's clean water infrastructure is sound and create more jobs throughout the county," said John Ravitz, executive vice president/COO of the Business Council of Westchester. Mr. Ravitz, who also serves as chair of the Westchester Chapter of the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV), added "The NYLCV has joined with the Clean Water Infrastructure state-wide coalition urging the Governor and the State Legislature in 2017 to provide the necessary funding to ensure that we are making the right investments in this area for the environment and for the local economy."

"We need to repair our water infrastructure and the costs are so high we can't do it alone," Mamaroneck Town Supervisor Seligson added. "The state clean water funds are crucial to help us move forward with the repairs that protect water quality and create jobs."

“A robust state/local partnership is vital to meeting our region’s infrastructure needs,” said Noam Bramson, Mayor of the City of New Rochelle. “By working together, we can make the essential, necessary investments in the future of our environment, economy, and quality of life.”

The Federated Conservationists of Westchester County longtime board member Carolyn Cunningham, said, “These water and sewer infrastructure funds are crucial to help Westchester communities leverage needed projects that will keep our water clean, including inflow and infiltration solutions to old sewer lines. FCWC has long supported such efforts.”

Mr. Pepe of the CIC and CAI concluded, “Mamaroneck and neighboring municipalities are key examples of our aging infrastructure needs. The CIC/CAI report findings demonstrate that municipalities throughout the region desperately need the support of New York State to meet this challenge. It is vital that New York State increase Clean Water funds in next year’s budget to \$800 million to address municipal needs and enhance our environment, economy and quality of life.”

A copy of the report has been distributed to the governor’s office and leaders of the State Legislature for their review and consideration. For additional information, contact CIC and CAI headquarters Tarrytown, NY at (914) 631-6070 or [cicwhv@aol.com](mailto:cicwhv@aol.com). The report will also be made available online at [www.cicnys.org](http://www.cicnys.org).

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About the Construction Industry Council of Westchester & Hudson Valley, Inc.

*The Construction Industry Council of Westchester and Hudson Valley, Inc. is a professional trade organization representing more than 600 businesses that are at the core of the region’s construction industry. These include contractors, suppliers, consultants and other professionals servicing the construction and building industries. CIC maintains day-to-day contact with local and state government officials who own and manage much of the region’s infrastructure and institutional facilities.*

About the Construction Advancement Institute of Westchester & Mid-Hudson, Inc.

*The Construction Advancement Institute is a management initiative that aims to ensure the prosperity, safety and well-being of communities in Westchester and the Lower Hudson Valley. The CAI is affiliated with the Building Contractors Association of Westchester & Mid-Hudson Region, Inc., which represents some 50 employers and thousands of employees.*