

Clean NH water takes state's commitment

THE HEALTH and well-being of Granite State families is a priority I've passionately championed during my time at the New Hampshire Senate. I'm eagerly looking forward to continuing that effort by focusing on a natural resource many often take for granted: water.

As we wake up each morning to start our day, whether it's brushing our teeth or brewing a cup of coffee — water is absolutely an essential part of our routine. Its necessity doesn't waver throughout the day, and thus every time we turn on the tap, we expect a dependable stream of clean drinking water. Unfortunately, not all areas of our Granite State are meeting that expectation. That is why I am introducing a pair of bills in the New Hampshire Senate this week to dedicate an additional \$40 million to clean water projects.

Our state's natural resources play an enormous role in an individual's health, and when it comes to a need as basic as water, it should be safe, clean, and readily available for every Granite Stater. Just last year we re-initiated state grants for water projects to combat PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), the "forever chemicals" that were byproducts of American industrial development over the last century.

Over the past several years, former Senate President Chuck Morse made PFAS contamination a priority for the Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund, directing state and federal resources to local infrastructure projects designed to mitigate PFAS pollution.

The PFAS Revolving Loan Fund has already provided more than \$35 million for nearly 30 projects across New Hampshire. My hometown of Bedford has received \$2.9 million for PFAS projects now in progress. I won't stop fighting to ensure my town has the resources it needs to combat this problem.

Work at the East Derry School in Derry and the Aquarion Water of N.H. project in North Hampton has already been completed. If we want to expand support for other

communities facing PFAS contamination, we need to refill the fund. My bill, SB 138, would add \$10 million to the PFAS Revolving Loan Fund over the next two years, which the Department of Environmental Services says would allow the program to accept new applications from communities in need.

Wastewater projects are another challenge for our communities. Properly treating wastewater is essential

to preserving water quality, especially during heavy storms. From sewer improvements to grit system upgrades, towns across the state are looking for assistance. But replacing antiquated sewer systems is a huge financial challenge to our towns. Projects from Colebrook to Conway to Concord and Claremont have already qualified for state support, but we need to authorize state funding for these projects to continue without placing a huge burden on local property taxpayers. My second bill, SB 230, would dedicate an additional \$30 million for approved wastewater projects across New Hampshire.

The Senate Finance Committee is holding public hearings on both bills this week, and I'll be at the State House making the case for clean water.

We always need to be careful when we spend the taxpayers' money. Responsible, conservative budgets mean lower taxes, a growing economy, and rising revenues. That allows us to afford more state support for key budget priorities. Setting aside \$40 million for clean water helps our environment, improves public health, and protects local taxpayers. I look forward to my fellow senators joining me in making clean water a top priority in 2023.

I've loved seeing our Granite State communities take advantage of the clean water resources we've opened up to them, knowing how our families will benefit as a result. This is what serving in the New Hampshire Senate is all about, working together to drive results for our home state.



Sen. Denise Ricciardi

Sen. Denise Ricciardi (R-Bedford) represents District 9.