



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**LI CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION RELEASE DRAINAGE STUDY HIGHLIGHTING NEED FOR OVERHAUL IN SUFFOLK AND NASSAU REGIONS**

***Report Intended to Raise Awareness of the Need to Invest in Major Infrastructure Improvements to Multiple Drainage Systems on Long Island***

**Long Island, NY** – The Long Island Contractors' Association (LICA) conducted an extensive drainage study highlighting the need for additional infrastructure investments in Suffolk and Nassau regions of Long Island. The report points to many factors that contribute to a deficient drainage system such as inadequate facilities, an aging infrastructure, outdated design standards, climate change, and rising sea levels among others.

The counties of Suffolk and Nassau are some of the densest regions in New York ranking 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> respectively, with 2.8 million residents in total. The dire economic costs of inadequate drainage include accelerated deterioration of infrastructure such as roadways and bridges, increased chances of erosion, damage to ecosystems, travel delays and longer response times for emergency vehicles.

**Marc Herbst, Executive Director of the Long Island Contractors' Association**, thanked its member firm **Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI)** who prepared the report, for their thorough analysis of our region's drainage issues. "GPI did a fabulous job in not only identifying deficiencies, but also pinpointing how to improve these systems to an overall state of good repair to ensure they function adequately in the future."

"There can no longer be an 'out of sight, out of mind' approach when it comes to the aging drainage system in Suffolk and Nassau. There are far too many people who depend on a quality drainage system, and with rising sea levels and increased superstorms, it's simply not

acceptable to gloss over this issue anymore. It's time to fund a new drainage infrastructure," said Herbst.

Many public officials and other community leaders also commented on the findings of the report and the need to address the drainage infrastructure systems on Long Island.

**New York State Senator Todd Kaminsky (member of Senate Transportation Committee):**

"Severe weather – and even normal rainstorms – cause massive flooding across Long Island's roadways. It is essential that we make substantial investments in our roads to ensure that average rainstorms do not paralyze our Island."

**New York State Assemblyman Fred Thiele (member of Assembly Transportation Committee):**

"Nassau and Suffolk counties are certainly vulnerable to extensive flood damage due to a lack of adequate drainage systems, and this is particularly evident in a post-Sandy Long Island. We are already seeing the adverse effects of climate change across our region, and extreme-weather events are becoming more frequent and more catastrophic. It is vitally important that municipalities in flood-prone areas across the Island have the necessary tools and resources to protect themselves from storm damages and the related costs. I commend the diligence of the Long Island Contractors' Association, Inc. in gathering this important information, and am committed to continuing to work at the state-level to ensure the identified drainage and infrastructure needs are met."

**New York State Assemblyman Dave McDonough (ranking member of Assembly Transportation Committee):**

"We can no longer wait to address the sustainability of the Long Island region. LICA's drainage study results clearly demonstrate the need for investing in upgrades and improvements in our drainage systems. Our economic, environmental and safety needs are at stake."

**New York State Assemblywoman Taylor Darling (member of Assembly Transportation Committee):**

"Residents across Long Island know all too well the effects poor drainage systems have on the Island. LICA's drainage study of Nassau and Suffolk Counties is an important step to get a better understanding of what needs to be done to correct these issues. As a New York State Representative, I look forward to working along with LICA as we try to resolve the serious drainage issues on Long Island."

**Nassau County Executive Laura Curran:**

"Proper drainage across our County is vital to maintaining our infrastructure. Thank you LICA for producing this important report and giving us the data we need to review our current systems and plan for any necessary upgrades."

**Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone:**

"Long Island is a coastal community and we have seen firsthand the threat of more frequent and intense storms. This report clearly lays out the need to make sure we have the right infrastructure in place to adequately handle future storms and the flooding that comes along

with them. As I have said before, it is time for us to get back in the business of investing in major infrastructure projects and improvement.”

**Suffolk County Director of Sustainability/Chief Recovery Officer Dorian Dale:**

“It is notable that the 2015 Suffolk County Comprehensive Water Resource Management Plan determined that Suffolk's water budget actually exceeded that of pre-development 40 years earlier. That is attributed largely to storm water and drainage systems constructed throughout the county. With the 2020 report on Long Island Drainage, LICA delineates that this once effective, protective system is suffering from inadequate maintenance and restoration. This at a time when extreme rain events and sea-level rise are inundating Long Island as never before. Houses can be elevated, as they have been post-Superstorm Sandy, but we'll be living in Venice unless we reinforce our drainage systems, build more catch basins and lay down more pervious surfaces. That will require commitment and resources.”

**Babylon Town Supervisor Rich Schaffer:**

“As a south shore community, Babylon struggles with the effects of outdated drainage infrastructure regularly. It is no secret that some streets south of Montauk Highway become impassible when high tide combines with a little bit of rain. While the Town of Babylon does all it can to combat flooding, we need help from our partners in the state and federal governments. I thank Marc Herbst of the Long Island Contractors' Association for this detailed report, as well as Governor Andrew Cuomo for his continued investment in Long Island.”

**Huntington Town Supervisor Chad Lupinacci:**

“Each year, the Town increases funds for road rehabilitation and repair, including drainage improvements, but there is only so much local tax revenue to go around and our funding only covers Town roads. For State and County roads, there is a serious need for infrastructure investment, and we need those Huntington tax dollars to come back to improve our roads and drainage systems.”

**Huntington Town Highway Superintendent Kevin S. Orelli:**

“The Town of Huntington has over 20,000 catch basins and 400 recharge basins. Even with average rainfall, we experience difficulty in maintaining the infrastructure that we have due to the many issues we still experience with flooding. There are many locations within the Town of Huntington that need additional drainage installed to alleviate the flooding onto property and into homes during mid to heavy rainstorms. Additional funding that we can obtain from New York State will be money well spent in keeping the roads in our town safer.”

**Islip Town Supervisor Angie Carpenter:**

“I commend Marc Herbst and the Long Island Contractors' Association for taking a leadership role in spearheading this study. As a Township with many low-lying communities, we know first-hand the negative affects flooding has on our roadways. Dozens of locations in the Town of Islip require costly pumping during heavy rains, high tide cycles and full moons, as well as the emergency evacuation of residents from homes and businesses. Climate change is causing worsening conditions. Infrastructure improvements are essential to residents' safety and quality of life.”

**Smithtown Town Supervisor Ed Wehrheim:**

"A majority of our drainage systems are over half a century old, about to reach the end of their lifespan. The Long Island drainage study provides us with the evidence to support our need for investing in major infrastructure improvements. This in-depth report will undoubtedly assist local towns and villages in securing support from other levels of government as we prepare a real plan to protect our roads & infrastructure from future major weather events."

**Smithtown Town Highway Superintendent Robert Murphy:**

"We were more than happy to participate in the Long Island drainage study and are grateful to LICA for providing this roadmap to protecting our infrastructure. The Long Island drainage study is a much-needed resource, equipped with the data necessary for municipalities such as ours to secure Federal & State funding to rebuild and maintain outdated systems."

**Association for a Better Long Island Executive Director Kyle Strober:**

"This report reveals several sad truths: our drainage infrastructure has been woefully ignored and, while there is no political constituency publicly demanding it be maintained, each and every one of us are impacted by its decrepit state of repair. This call to action needs to alert those with the political power to insist this fundamental responsibility of government be addressed."

**Citizens Campaign for the Environment Executive Director Adrienne Esposito:**

"Climate Change, sea level rise, and aging infrastructure are the perfect storm for increased flooding to communities. However, flooding is not only caused by rising sea levels but also the lack of critical maintenance and funding to update our infrastructure. Incorporating green infrastructure, such as bioswales, rain gardens, and permeable pavement can enhance mitigation efforts. Kudos to LICA for an informative and usable report that can help guide agencies and communities to manage floods and become more resilient to future storms."

**Long Island Builders Institute Chief Executive Officer Mitch Pally:**

"The Long Island Builders Institute strongly supports the findings included within this report and its call for immediate infrastructure funding to alleviate many of the severe flooding issues which impact upon the quality of life all of our residents. It is extremely important that this issue be one of the most important issues facing our state and local governments in the years ahead and now is the time to create a plan to remediate and control the devastating effects which occur with every large storm."

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**LICA:** As the voice of Long Island's highway and infrastructure professionals, LICA represents Long Island's premier heavy construction general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and industry supporters. Focused primarily in the infrastructure construction industry, such as highways, bridges, sewers, parks, other public works and private site development, LICA's member companies play a significant role in sustaining the region's quality of life and economic engine that is Nassau and Suffolk Counties.