

COMMENTARY

Environmental construction a driving force on Long Island



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As New York and Long Island bounce back from the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we are already seeing the positive impacts infrastructure investment can have on the economy. Maybe surprisingly, a huge chunk of that investment has come from an unlikely place: environmental construction projects. It's the best kept secret on Long Island, but it's true; Economic development goes hand and hand with environmental infrastructure. Who knew?

Throughout the year, there have been dozens of important environmental projects that have produced good paying, shovel ready jobs at a time when we need them most. This work may oftentimes go unnoticed, but LICA firms have been at it all year.

Don't take my word for it; the proof is in the work. LICA firms like Bove Industries has worked to prevent leakage from the Brookhaven Landfill. H2M is advising municipal water suppliers and private water utilities to make sure we're drinking fresh, clean water. GPI is conducting important work around the quality of our drainage systems on the Island. That's just the beginning.

If you're planning to take the family out to Jones Beach this summer, check out the new educational Nature and Energy Center and thank Peter Scalamandre & Sons for assisting in construction. Posillico Materials have been busy operating the nation's largest contaminating soil washing facility. Rason

Materials, RJ Industries, Roanoke Sand & Gravel, and Roman Stone have all worked tirelessly on various environmental construction projects that have produced better quality systems, while pushing the economy along. It's a win-win.

Much of this work will continue with more funding for infrastructure projects down the road. In fact, on Earth Day, Steve Ballone announced \$100 million in new funding for various environmental projects that will create thousands of jobs and lasting infrastructure. Suffolk County needs a revolutionized sewer system, which will spur tremendous economic development as well.

These projects should be a top priority moving forward and would be a boon for business in two ways. One, it brings shovel-ready jobs to the region, and two, it would increase system capacity which would enable economic development to enhance the region. The benefits exist in both short and long term capacity

Next year, voters will get to decide on the Environmental Bond act, which if approved will bring hundreds of millions in dollars for environmental construction projects and clean water projects across the state. That is the kind of investment New York needs to keep this recovery going strong, and to continue to make Long Island a safe, clean, and wonderful place to live, work and raise a family.

Without these investments, Long Island's economic development will halt, dragging the economy and livelihood of many down with it. We must continue to embrace the fact that economic and environmental interests go hand in hand. It's for the good of our future, our economy, and prosperity.

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