

BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD

Mayor John Birkner, Jr.



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January 13, 2014

State of New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection
401 East State Street
Box 402
Trenton, NJ 08625-0402

Attn.: Bob Martin - Commissioner

Re.: Pascack Valley Waterway Report

Dear Commissioner Martin,

Since December of 2011, I have sent numerous letters to you and your staff at the NJDEP seeking assistance with the chronic flooding problems along the Pascack Brook in Westwood and Hillsdale. During that period, I have also had at least a dozen conversations with members of your staff expressing the concerns of our residents. Most recently, I sat with Mr. Fred Sickles, Ms. Cindy Randazzo, and Ms. Suzanne Uhler Dietrick during the legislative "Round Table" sessions while at the New Jersey League of Municipalities Annual Conference this past November. Prior to that your office cancelled a meeting to discuss this matter that had been scheduled for September 13, 2013.

To date I have not had any productive communications from your office regarding our concerns, nor has anyone from the NJDEP offered any formal response to our requests to modify the Standard Operating Procedure at the Woodcliff Lake Reservoir Dam. It is now at the point beyond frustrating that your office continues to ignore the plight of our residents that have been the victims of severe and repetitive losses due to flooding. Quite frankly, I find the lack of response from the NJDEP to be unacceptable.

After suffering five flooding events in 2011, the Borough of Westwood had commissioned an engineering review of the operations for the Woodcliff Lake Reservoir Dam. The engineering report was submitted to you and your staff for review on numerous occasions. The results of this study essentially recommend that the bascule gates at the dam be operated to maintain a 91 foot water elevation in the reservoir twelve months of the year in order to reduce the susceptibility of flooding caused by intense precipitation events.

We recognize the concerns for water allocation and distribution during periods of potential drought. However, we are seeking direction from the NJDEP to modify the Standard Operating Procedure at the Woodcliff Lake Dam to maintain the level of the

Woodcliff Lake Reservoir at the "Winter Mode" level of 91' elevation for the entire year. We repeat our request that United Water New Jersey be required to operate the bascule gates accordingly.

The Borough of Westwood has always considered the NJDEP to be instrumental partners assisting our municipality in reaching our goals of maintaining the highest standards in environmental health, safety, and sustainability. The severe and repetitive flooding that impacts our community greatly compromises the health and well being of entire neighborhoods in Westwood and our neighboring communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should have any questions or require additional information. I look forward to your response and for the opportunity of further discussion considering the importance of our request and the impact on the health and safety of our residents.

Borough of Westwood



John Birkner, Jr. - Mayor
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cc. Borough of Westwood Council
Cindy Randazzo, NJDEP
Fred Sickles, NJDEP
Suzanne Uhler-Dietrick, NJDEP
Hon. Max Arnowitz, Borough of Hillsdale Mayor