

Suffolk begins \$409M sewer infrastructure project



The state and federally-funded sewer project will prevent pollutants from 1,884 home cesspools around the Forge River, seen above in Mastic, from emptying into the southern bay. Credit: Newsday / John Paraskevas

By John Asburyjohn.asbury@newsday.com[JohnAsbury](https://www.newsday.com/JohnAsbury) October 30, 2021

Suffolk County officials have started a \$409 million sewer project that will eliminate thousands of cesspools and connect nearly 6,000 homes to the sewer system.

Gov. Kathy Hochul and County Executive Steve Bellone announced the start of construction on the project Friday —the ninth anniversary of when Superstorm Sandy battered the South Shore.

The state and federally-funded project is aimed at preventing pollutants from cesspools, particularly nitrogen, from emptying into the southern bays. Officials said the new sewer system will also help restore marshlands, which act as a natural flood barrier to South Shore communities.

"This groundbreaking represents the largest expansion of sewer infrastructure in Suffolk County in nearly 50 years," Bellone said Friday at the groundbreaking in West Babylon.

"If there is a project that can unite us it is a massive investment in our infrastructure here that will create jobs and protect our most precious natural resource, our water quality."

Dubbed the Suffolk County Coastal Resiliency Initiative, the project will connect 2,184 homes in the Carlls River Watershed in the Town of Babylon to the Suffolk County Sewer District and 1,884 properties in the Forge River Watershed in Brookhaven Town to a new treatment plant being built in Mastic.

The project also will connect nearly 1,500 homes in Sewer District No. 3, which includes Deer Park, North Babylon, West Babylon, Wyandanch, Wheatley Heights and West Islip.

As part of the project, county officials said a 48-inch pipe will be installed beneath the Southern State Parkway to connect Wyandanch to an existing sewer system transferring wastewater to a treatment plant at Bergen Point in Babylon Town.

Individual homes will begin to be connected in November and Bellone said the county has requested more than \$1 billion to connect 12,000 additional homes in the district.

The sewer project will not come at any cost to homeowners, county officials said. The county is funding the sewer work through \$243 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and a \$66 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer said in a statement that he's "proud to have fought tooth-and-nail to deliver a massive \$300-million-plus federal investment for this vital resiliency project."

The state Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services also is providing \$30.7 million and Suffolk County will use \$42 million in federal stimulus funds and \$24 million from a sewer stabilization reserve fund.



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