

CALL FOR ACTION ON LI WATER

Leaders tell EPA to set max levels for contaminants

BY ROBERT BRODSKY
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Members of Long Island's congressional delegation are urging the Environmental Protection Agency to immediately set maximum contaminant levels for Nassau and Suffolk county's drinking water, which a watchdog group found to be the most contaminated in the state.

"The quality of water being supplied to Long Island homes has been seriously compromised by a unique combination of contaminants and pollutants, necessitating immediate intervention from the Environmental Protection Agency," wrote Reps. Lee Zeldin (R-Shirley), Peter King (R-Seaford), Tom Suozzi (D-



HOWARD SCHNAPP

NYPIRG: Water on LI has the most emerging contaminants.

Glen Cove) and Kathleen Rice (D-Garden City), in letter Friday to EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler.

The move comes on the heels of a study issued last week by the Albany-based New York Public Interest Research

Group, which found that 19 "distinct emerging contaminants" were detected in Long Island's drinking water between 2013 and 2016. According to the group's study, Long Island has the most contaminated drinking water in New York State.

Nassau has the highest number of water systems in the state with detected emerging contaminants, the report found. They include 1,4 dioxane, a solvent used to keep machinery greased that is also a byproduct of certain personal-care products. The EPA has said 1,4 dioxane is likely a carcinogen.

The report also found high levels of perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) in Long Island's water supplies. The chemicals, used for decades to manufacture cleaning products, carpeting, Teflon cookware and industrial-strength firefighting foam, have been linked to testicular and kidney cancers, liver damage, and developmental effects in fetuses

and breast-fed infants.

The group's study noted the use of the firefighting foam during training exercises, "such as those undertaken at the Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant in Calverton and Gabreski Air National Guard Base, have been known to introduce chemicals, such as PFAS, into the surrounding ground water potentially contaminating drinking supplies."

At the standard recommended by the state, an estimated 23 percent of public water wells in New York would need treatment — at a cost of \$855 million in capital costs and \$45 million a year for annual maintenance and operations, according to state officials, who also noted that a carbon filtration treatment system, alone, costs approximately \$1 million per impacted well.

"The combination of all these challenges presents a serious threat to drinking water and public health for all Long Islanders, and I therefore urge you to develop a maximum con-

taminant level for PFOA, PFOS, and 1,4 dioxane as soon as possible," the lawmakers wrote in the letter, which also seeks federal funding and technical support for Long Island water providers and regulators.

The EPA did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Upon release of the study, the NYPIRG, included a few recommendations, which are in line with the lawmakers' request. They were: implement testing of the emerging contaminants for every water system maintained by the public, strengthen standards for potentially unsafe chemicals, mandate testing of private household wells and bar the use of certain chemicals until proved safe.

Emerging contaminants are those that previously were not known, were not detectable with available science or were not present in the supply, according to Christopher Gobler, marine sciences professor at Stony Brook University.

Bail denied in Times Square attack scheme

BY MATTHEW CHAYES
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A Queens man was ordered jailed without bail on an illegal-gun charge Friday after he allegedly discussed with an undercover officer how to attack Times Square with suicide vests, grenades and firearms.

Ashiqul Alam, a Bangladeshi citizen with a green card, was arraigned at Brooklyn federal court and accused of the felony of knowingly and intentionally possessing firearms with obliterated serial numbers. The crime is punishable by up to 5 years in prison, said prosecutor's office spokesman Tyler Daniels.

Alam, who was arrested Thursday, is accused of purchasing two Glock 9 mm semi-automatic pistols — their serial numbers obliterated in violation of federal law — from an undercover officer during a sting, according to a complaint based on recorded meetings between Alam and undercover officers between August 2018 and Thursday.

Alam, 22, was not charged di-

rectly with a terrorism crime or with planning an attack. He was not required to enter a plea.

According to the complaint, Alam, while talking with the undercover officer, praised Osama bin Laden's terrorist attacks ("Bin Laden's mission is a complete success, thousands of American soldiers died and trillions of their monies gone in the war."), discussed attacking while wearing suicide vests, which he said are "painless" ("You die right away. Better than prison, right?") and trying "to shoot down [a derogatory term for gays]."

Alam said he admired ISIS, listened to speeches by the extremist cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, and conducted reconnaissance of Times Square, according to the complaint. Some of his comments were elicited by the undercover officer.

Assistant U.S. Attorney David Kessler told the court: "The defendant has taken specific steps to plan an attack in New York City."

Alam's defense attorney James



AP/ELIZABETH WILLIAMS

In this courtroom drawing, Ashiqul Alam, far right, makes his initial court appearance in Brooklyn on Friday.

Darrow said his client is a student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice with no criminal history who is working two jobs. Arguing unsuccessfully for Alam's release, Darrow said Alam was charged only with a gun crime, and that he lives with his parents who were present in the court-

room and were willing to put up their apartment's \$200,000 equity to secure Alam's release.

Magistrate Judge Cheryl L. Pollak rejected Darrow's argument that Alam should be freed, calling him a flight risk with ties to Bangladesh.

"At this point I am finding that

he is a danger to the community and I am going to order him permanently detained," she said.

During the sting, Alam said he hoped to hit Times Square during a large event or kill a senior government official in Washington, D.C., the complaint said.

"When it blows up, those balls explode and the metal goes everywhere. The more better the explosives, the more farther the shrapnel could go," he said, according to the complaint.

Alam said of bin Laden: "He did his job. He did what he is supposed to do. Now it's up to us," according to the complaint.

But he needed the undercover officer's help: While driving to a firing range, he said he needed a ride driving to and from an upcoming LASIK eye surgery appointment, the complaint said.

"Let's say we are in an attack, right, say that my glasses fall off. What if I accidentally shoot you?" he allegedly said. "You know what I mean. Imagine what the news channel would call me, the 'Looney Tunes Terrorist' or the 'Blind Terrorist.'"