

The Honorable James Skoufis
39th Senate District
47 Grand Street
Newburgh, NY 12550
RE: City of Newburgh Water Crisis; Bill – S1759A
April 4, 2022

Dear Senator Skoufis,

My name is Pattianne Reilly, and I am a resident of Nassau County (District 3) and an MSW student attending Adelphi University's School of Social Work. I am writing to you regarding your Newburgh Water Crisis legislation. I am part of a university-wide team of students working together to address environmental justice issues that impact individuals, families, communities, and organizations. My group focuses on the impacts the environment can have on a population's mental health.

As part of the Adelphi University School of Social Work Social Action initiative, we conducted two StoryCorps.org interviews with residents of Newburgh, NY. We learned from hearing the lived experiences of Newburgh residents as they contend with the short-term and long-ranging mental health and wellbeing impacts of "forever chemicals" in our drinking water. As residents of the Hudson Valley and Greater New York, we recognize that we are all vulnerable to the devastation of a community water crisis. Therefore, my colleagues and I have engaged in research to learn about the repercussions of the contamination, with particular attention to mental health ramifications.

We thank you for your careful attention to the Newburgh Water Crisis and for introducing legislation (Bill S1759A) to ensure the safety of your constituents' drinking water. We understand that swift changes were made in 2016 to access the Catskill Aqueduct in response to the high level of PFAS in Washington Lake. However, legislators like yourself uncovered that more regulation was needed to maintain a non-toxic water supply. My classmates and I are impressed with the tenacity shown by you and your co-sponsors in introducing this critical piece of legislation and highlighting the danger of "emerging contaminants." This bill addresses the need for more stringent evaluation and regulation of our drinking water and requires testing for water systems serving less than 10,000 people. This advocacy and the passing of bill S1759A benefits

those in Newburgh and New York State and is important legislation for the health and wellbeing of all U.S. citizens.

New York state residents are struggling with water quality issues, and they are invisible. However, through our research and interviews with Newburgh residents, we have found that many are experiencing stress impacts due to poor water quality. For example, during one of the StoryCorps.org interviews, a Newburgh resident reported that he and his wife had experienced poor water quality living in Middletown, NY, more than ten years ago. As a result, these relatively new Newburgh residents already have a regular driving regimen to get their water for home and cooking use from a Port Jervis, NY lake. This Newburgh resident reported the ongoing stress he experiences regarding not trusting Newburgh's water quality and how his family's relationship with water use in their home has changed.

This social action learning experience regarding the environmental justice and mental health impacts of the Newburgh Water Crisis has broadened our collective sense of the meaning of community action and connection in social work practice. In reaching out to your office, we are engaged in local policy and practicing advocacy by uplifting the voices of the vulnerable and invisible among us. We thank you for fighting for environmental justice on behalf of our Newburgh neighbors. I've included the StoryCorps.org links to the interviews with two Newburgh Residents below.

Shelita Birchett Benash Advanced Year MSW Student at Adelphi University School of Social Work Interviewing Reverend Preston in Newburgh, NY

Archived: March 21, 2022

<https://archive.storycorps.org/interviews/shelita-birchett-benash-2/>

StoryCorps.org Interview ID: APP3531227

Emil Reyesbrito: Newburgh's ongoing water crisis: Angelo's experience

Archived: April 4, 2022

<https://archive.storycorps.org/interviews/newburghs-ongoing-water-crisis-angelos-experience/>

StoryCorps.org Interview ID: APP 35336153

Sincerely,

Pattianne Reilly, Nassau County, (District 3)

Shelita Birchett Benash, Ulster County (District 13)

Naima Gray, Suffolk County, (District 2)

Chad Williams, Queens County, (District 31)

Emil Reyesbrito, Orange County, (District 2)

Ciara McDonald, Onondaga County, (District 49)

Pattianne Reilly (pattiannereilly@mail.adelphi.edu)

674 Park Avenue

Manhasset, NY 11030

The Honorable Jeremy A. Cooney
56th Senate District
280 East Broad Street
Suite 110
Rochester, NY 14604
RE: City of Newburgh Water Crisis; Bill – S1759A
April 4, 2022

Dear Senator Cooney,

My name is Ciara McDonald, and I am a resident of Onondaga County (District 49) and a BSW student attending Adelphi University's School of Social Work. I am writing to you regarding your Newburgh Water Crisis legislation. I am part of a university-wide team of students working together to address environmental justice issues that impact individuals, families, communities, and organizations. My group focuses on the impacts the environment can have on a population's mental health.

As part of the Adelphi University School of Social Work Social Action initiative, we conducted two StoryCorps.org interviews with residents of Newburgh, NY. We learned from hearing the lived experiences of Newburgh residents as they contend with the short-term and long-ranging mental health and wellbeing impacts of “forever chemicals” in our drinking water. As residents of the Hudson Valley and Greater New York, we recognize that we are all vulnerable to the devastation of a community water crisis. My colleagues and I have engaged in research to learn about the repercussions of the contamination, with particular attention to mental health ramifications.

We thank you for your careful attention to the Newburgh Water Crisis and for introducing legislation (Bill S1759A) to ensure the safety of your constituents' drinking water. We understand that swift changes were made in 2016 to access the Catskill Aqueduct in response to the high level of PFAS in Washington Lake. However, legislators like yourself uncovered that more regulation was needed to maintain a non-toxic water supply. My classmates and I are impressed with the tenacity shown by you and your co-sponsors in introducing this critical piece

of legislation and highlighting the danger of “emerging contaminants.” This bill addresses the need for more stringent evaluation and regulation of our drinking water and requires testing for water systems serving less than 10,000 people. This advocacy and the passing of bill S1759A not only benefits those in Newburgh and New York State but is important legislation for the health and well-being of all U.S. citizens.

There are New York state residents who are struggling with water quality issues and they are invisible. Through our research and interviews with Newburgh residents, we have found that many are experiencing stress impacts as a result of poor water quality. For example, during one of the StoryCorps.org interviews we conducted, a Newburgh resident reported that he and his wife had experienced poor water quality when they were living in Middletown, NY more than ten years ago. As a result, these relatively new Newburgh residents already have an established regimen of driving to get their water for home and cooking use from a Port Jervis, NY lake. This Newburgh resident reported the ongoing stress he experiences regarding not trusting Newburgh’s water quality and how his family’s relationship with water use in their home has changed.

This social action learning experience regarding the environmental justice and mental health impacts of the Newburgh Water Crisis has broadened our collective sense of the meaning of community action and connection and social work practice. In reaching out to your office, we are engaged in local policy and practicing advocacy by uplifting the voices of the vulnerable and invisible among us. We thank you for fighting for environmental justice on behalf of our Newburgh neighbors

Emil Reyesbrito: Newburgh’s ongoing water crisis: Angelo’s experience

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Sincerely,

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Emil Reyesbrito, Orange County, (District 2)

Pattianne Reilly, Nassau County, (District 3)

Shelita Birchett Benash, Ulster County, (District 13)

Naima Gray, Suffolk County, (District 2)

Chad Williams, Queens County, (District 31)

Ciara McDonald (ciaramcdonald@mail.adelphi.edu)

51 Chaucer Circle

Baldwinsville, NY 13027

The Honorable Samra G. Brouk

55th Senate District

274 N. Goodman Street

Suite B127

Rochester, NY 14607

RE: City of Newburgh Water Crisis; Bill – S1759A

April 4, 2022

Dear Senator Brouk,

My name is Naima Gray, and I am a resident of Suffolk County (District 2) and an MSW student attending Adelphi University's School of Social Work. I am writing to you regarding your Newburgh Water Crisis legislation. I am part of a university-wide team of students working together to address environmental justice issues that impact individuals, families, communities, and organizations. My group focuses on the impacts the environment can have on a population's mental health.

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We thank you for your careful attention to the Newburgh Water Crisis and for introducing legislation (Bill S1759A) to ensure the safety of your constituents' drinking water. We understand

that swift changes were made in 2016 to access the Catskill Aqueduct in response to the high level of PFAS in Washington Lake. However, legislators like yourself uncovered that more regulation was needed to maintain a non-toxic water supply. My classmates and I are impressed with the tenacity shown by you and your co-sponsors in introducing this critical piece of legislation and highlighting the danger of "emerging contaminants." This bill addresses the need for more stringent evaluation and regulation of our drinking water and requires testing for water systems serving less than 10,000 people. This advocacy and the passing of bill S1759A benefits those in Newburgh and New York State and is important legislation for the health and wellbeing of all U.S. citizens.

New York state residents are struggling with water quality issues, and they are invisible. However, through our research and interviews with Newburgh residents, we have found that many are experiencing stress impacts due to poor water quality. For example, during one of the StoryCorps.org interviews, a Newburgh resident reported that he and his wife had experienced poor water quality living in Middletown, NY, more than ten years ago. As a result, these relatively new Newburgh residents already have a regular driving regimen to get their water for home and cooking use from a Port Jervis, NY lake. This Newburgh resident reported the ongoing stress he experiences regarding not trusting Newburgh's water quality and how his family's relationship with water use in their home has changed.

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Sincerely,

Naima Gray, Suffolk County, (District 2)

Chad Williams, Queens County, (District 31)

Pattianne Reilly, Nassau County, (District 3)

Shelita Birchett Benash, Ulster County (District 13)

Emil Reyesbrito, Orange County, (District 2)

Ciara McDonald, Onondaga County, (District 49)

Naima Gray (naimagray@mail.adelphi.edu)

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