

PRESS RELEASE

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Community Leaders Urge Immediate Water Conservation At Press Conference in Southampton on Tuesday

***Local Firefighters, Emergency Services Workers, Elected Officials, Join Call
For Conservation During Underway Hot and Dry Period***

Representatives of the Suffolk County Water Authority joined local firefighters and emergency services workers at a press conference in Southampton Village on Tuesday to urge East End residents to take immediate steps to cut their water use amid a prolonged hot and dry period.

“It is imperative that residents switch the time of day in which they water their lawns away from the early morning hours, when the massive use of automatic lawn irrigation systems is pushing water infrastructure to the brink every morning,” said SCWA Chairman Patrick Halpin.

“Utilizing irrigation systems earlier in the evening will ensure we have water available for emergency services and firefighting purposes.”

At the press conference, held at SCWA’s West Prospect Street pump station in Southampton Village, Halpin announced that an underway Stage 1 water emergency is being expanded to cover all SCWA customers on the East End. The water emergency urgently asks East End residents to immediately stop lawn watering between the hours of midnight and 7 a.m., when large numbers of residents set their automatic irrigation systems to activate, putting tremendous stress on SCWA infrastructure. The wording of the water emergency also asks residents to immediately cease all non-essential water uses.

Halpin said that SCWA staff would be in the streets in the coming days during the early morning hours to ensure compliance with the water emergency. And he said that SCWA staff would also be contacting, one-on-one, the biggest water users seeking to get them to cut water use and to guide them how to do so.

SCWA’s call was joined by many East End officials.

“We ask that property owners and managers heed the requests of our water authority officials to make sure our firefighters have the water volume they need to not only provide proper fire

suppression but to also keep members of our service and the public safe,” said Southampton Fire Department Chief Alfred Callahan.

“Stony Brook Southampton Hospital asks all village residents to join us in doing their part to support the Water Authority’s efforts to conserve water by following all guidelines during this emergency,” said Southampton Hospital Vice President of Community and Government Relations Robert Ross. “Please heed the appeal from SCWA Chairman, Pat Halpin.”

“I urge residents to act prudently and take the necessary steps to help conserve water to ensure that our emergency service personnel have the resources they need to keep the community safe,” said New York State Senator Anthony Palumbo.

“The frequent and severe heat challenges show that taking proactive steps to moderate the use of water and ensure ample supplies for emergency services throughout the rest of summer is now more critical than ever,” said New York State Assemblyman Fred Thiele, Jr. “I recognize the efforts made by East End residents and businesses to use water more efficiently and I am confident that we can all find further opportunities to keep more water in reserve and help protect our most vulnerable communities.”

“According to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 44% of the U.S. is currently in drought situations to varying degrees,” said Suffolk Legislator Bridget Fleming. “East End communities are at a Stage 1 emergency level due to the prolonged hot and dry weather. I applaud the steps being taken by the Suffolk County Water Authority during this time, and we will continue to work alongside them as we monitor the situation. We must collectively act by conserving non-essential water usage and embracing water-saving measures such as rain sensors or smart sprinkler controllers.”

“We live in a place where we usually have water in abundance, but right now, we all need to do our part to make sure there is enough water availability for our firefighters and other emergency services,” said Southampton Village Mayor Jesse Warren.

“A little cooperation and change of existing habits will result in a healthy landscape and adequate water supply,” said Mike Dwyer of the Irrigation Association of New York.

Also attending the press conference to support conservation were Town of Southampton Supervisor Jay Schneiderman, Southampton Village Mayor Jesse Warren, Town of Southampton Code Administrator and Emergency Management Coordinator Ryan Murphy, Chief Town of Southampton Fire Marshal John Rankin, SCWA Chief Executive Officer Jeffrey Szabo, SCWA Board Secretary Tim Bishop and SCWA Board Member Jacqueline Gordon.

The Suffolk County Water Authority is an independent public-benefit corporation operating under the authority of the Public Authorities Law of the State of New York. Serving approximately 1.2 million Suffolk County residents, the Authority operates without taxing power on a not-for-profit basis.