

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

SCWA JOINS STATE AND COUNTY OFFICIALS IN PUSHING FOR 1,4-DIOXANE REGULATION

SCWA Chief Executive Officer Jeffrey W. Szabo met with various state and county officials, including State Health Commissioner Howard Zucker and Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, to develop an action plan for the regulation of 1,4-dioxane. We all agreed to push the EPA to set a drinking water standard for 1,4-dioxane expediently, and signed a letter to that effect.

In the absence of state or federal action on 1,4-dioxane, the Authority proactively created its own pilot program to treat and remove the compound from water using an Advanced Oxidation Process (AOP). The pilot program, approved by the Department of Health in November is the first of its kind in New York State. During AOP, raw ground water passes through a reactor, where hydrogen peroxide reacts with ultraviolet light to form a high energy oxidant, or hydroxyl radical. The hydroxyl radicals are responsible for the destruction of 1,4-dioxane. The reactor is expected to be fully operational by April.

“We’re proud to have taken a leading role in this effort to address a contamination concern, both through the development of treatment technology and through efforts to bring the potential threat of 1,4-dioxane to the attention of regulators,” Szabo said. “Though the cancer risk of 1,4-dioxane when digested through drinking water appears to be low, it is imperative that regulators make a determination quickly as to the potential danger and set a regulation, particularly given that the chemical does not appear to respond to already approved forms of treatment, such as Granular Activated Carbon.”

New York State has pledged to assist with funds to offset the capital and operating expenses if water suppliers are required to build AOP equipment at numerous pump stations, as the cost of doing so could easily run into the tens of millions of dollars. SCWA applauds this pledge.

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.

SCWA CEO Jeffrey W. Szabo signs a letter urging the EPA to set a federal drinking water standard for 1,4-dioxane along with (from left) New York State Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Regional Director Carrie Meek Gallagher, Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone and Assemblyman Steve Englebright.

