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Funds to Modernize Sewer System, Clean-Up Environment, Save Taxpayers Dollars

Washington, DC -- Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today announced that the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission, which is responsible for the sewage in 47 North Jersey towns, including ten Bergen County towns and Kearny, will receive \$2.5 million in new federal funds to modernize its overburdened and outdated system. Rothman, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, secured the funds as part of the Veterans Affairs - Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2002.

"The Passaic Valley's sewer system now combines storm water and sanitary sewers," Rothman said. "Unfortunately, we now know that this combination often overloads this system, and causes untreated waste to be discharged into our local waterways. These federal dollars will allow the PVSC to modernize the sewer system to not only keep sewage out of our waterways, but to save local taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in unnecessary treatment of storm water. This appropriation of federal money will have a positive and far-reaching impact on the lives of all Passaic Valley Residents for today and generations to come."

PVSC operates one of the largest wastewater treatment plants in the nation, treating wastewater from over 1 million people in 47 towns including Fair Lawn, Elmwood Park, Saddle Brook, Garfield, Lodi, Wallington, Rutherford, Lyndhurst, North Arlington, and Kearny, in Rothman's Ninth Congressional District. It is currently implementing an \$82 million plan that will reduce the environmentally detrimental impacts of combined sewer overflows program, and will produce direct environmental benefits for the 17 million people living in the New Jersey/New York area.

"Although sewerage issues are not on most people's radar screen, this is an essential task that must be done well. Many of our combined sewer systems are not equipped to handle wet weather fronts that cause environmentally dangerous overflows," said Congressman Bill Pascrell Jr. (D-NJ), who also worked to secure the funds. "This funding the New Jersey delegation secured in bipartisan fashion will enable the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission to provide relief for costs that would otherwise be picked up by our towns and cities."

Rothman said the new federal appropriation demonstrates the strong financial partnership that exists between the federal, state, and local government. So far, the State of New Jersey has awarded PVSC \$15 million for the engineering design of improvements to the plant, the federal government has provided \$8.5 million in grants, and there has also been a local match of \$10 million.

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