



# Congressman Tim Bishop

*FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK*

## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **BISHOP INTRODUCES CLEAN WATER LEGISLATION AS FIRST BILL**

*Bill Protects Clean Water, Promotes Community Right-to-Know*

**Riverhead, NY**—Today Congressman Tim Bishop (D-Southampton) announced his first piece of legislation is a bill to protect clean water. The “Raw Sewage Community Right to Know Act” requires sewage operators to monitor their systems and notify the public about sanitary sewage overflows (SSOs) that affect the health of our communities. Currently, there are no statistics kept on how many SSOs occur each year, however, it is estimated that nationwide there are between 140,000-715,000.

“This bill represents values I am deeply committed to—protecting our environment and standing up for our communities,” Bishop said. “I am very proud that my first bill as a United States Congressman represents these values that are important to me as well as to the health and safety of Long Islanders.”

“I would like to thank Congressman Bishop for his leadership in bringing this problem to the attention of the nation,” Sarah Meyland, Executive Director, Citizens Campaign for the Environment said. “This legislation is vital to get information to the public about sewage overflows which contaminate the water and make our families sick.”

The Centers for Disease Control estimate that between 1.8-3.5 million Americans become sick annually because of swimming in water contaminated by sewage overflows. This inadequately treated sewage is filled with bacteria, viruses, parasites, and worms that make people sick. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the loss of swimming opportunities due to pathogen contamination is valued at \$1-2 billion annually, while economic losses due to swimming-related illnesses are estimated at \$28 billion.

Many sewer systems do not routinely monitor to detect sewer overflows or report those that do occur to environmental or public health agencies. Public health authorities are not routinely notified of sewer overflows that threaten public health.

“Better monitoring, reporting, and public notification of sewer overflows could save millions of Americans from getting sick every year,” Bishop said. “It is vital to the health and safety of our communities to know what is in their swimming and drinking water. It is not unreasonable to require sewer operators to inform the community when there is an overflow.”

Bishop has already recruited 10 co-sponsors to his bill. The bill has the support of several influential national environmental groups including Sierra Club, National Resources Defense Council, Clean Water Action, American Rivers, and Friends of the Earth.

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