



CHIP'S FOR WATER, SEWER AND STORMWATER

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Arose by any other name... You can call it S7551 or A9611. Call it the Consolidated Local Infrastructure Program or CLIP's. Or how about S7389 or A9651 or the Safe Water Infrastructure Action Program or SWAP. They all have one thing in common. They are all basically the same proposed legislation designed to aid municipalities in addressing the crumbling water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure. For the purpose of this article I am going to refer to all the versions as one.

This proposed legislation would be crafted similar to the consolidated local State and Highway Improvement Program, or CHIPs, as we are most familiar with. Under this legislation, an amount of not less than two hundred million dollars (too many zeros for me) would be appropriated annually to assist municipalities with repairs, replacement and rehabilitation of critical water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure. It would provide a funding stream that would be used to supplement your operation and maintenance (O&M) budget. Notice I said SUPPLEMENT and not replace your O&M budget. The whole idea behind this legislation is to provide municipalities with extra monies to update and upgrade aging infrastructure. It would allow you to address more than your budgeted O&M would allow, and should NEVER be used to lower O&M budgets. Got it? Good.

Keep in mind this is still proposed legislation, not something that has been passed. The bills have been referred to committees and we hope they will be taken up when the legislature reconvenes in January 2017. As proposed legislation it will most likely be added to, subtracted from, rewritten, renumbered and otherwise tweaked, which is why I am letting you know about this now. I have been talking about this proposed legislation while out and about in your systems. I have begun to compile a list of questions, comments and concerns that have been raised by you. When (I am being positive here) this legislation moves forward, we (New York Rural Water Association) will be making sure your questions and concerns are addressed. Nothing is set in stone yet. The funding formula has not been devised, language is still ambiguous, responsibility for promulgating the regulation as written falls to the Commissioner of Transportation, rather than DEC and DOH, and how the money will actually be distributed for the various infrastructure needs are just some of the questions

and concerns I have listed.

As I stated above, this is proposed legislation but legislation that is needed in order to get a handle on, and ahead of, our infrastructure needs. The bill numbers are likely to change but the acronyms, CLIPs and SWAP will remain the same. I encourage you to go to www.nysenate.gov and search either S7551 (CLIPs) or S7389 (SWAP) or their assembly bills and learn more about this proposed legislation. Send me your questions, comments and concerns. I am hopeful that together we can help shape this proposed legislation into something beneficial to all. And remember, a bill by any other number will still be Clips, or Swap. 💧💧💧
