



RALLY 2016

Pat Scalera | CEO, NYRWA

As I write this article, our NYRWA team has just returned from our annual rally in Washington, DC. I would first like to thank all of our communities who sent letters of appreciation for the services NYRWA provided to your utilities. Each of your Congressional leaders received copies of those letters which helps with our efforts to continue the support of our programs.



I wish to thank Matt Thorp, Florence Braunius, John O'Connell, Jason Opferbeck, Jim Dwyer, and Jamie Herman for their participation in all of our appointments with our Senators and Congressional Representatives, sharing our message on the importance of these programs that provide training and onsite technical assistance to the small and rural communities.



The Rally started on a very good platform with special guests attending the NRWA Board Meeting including Lisa Mensah, Under Secretary for USDA, Rural Development; Brandon McBride, Administrator for USDA Rural Utilities; Jacki Ponti, Assistant Administrator for USDA Rural Utilities; Dr. Peter Grevatt, Director of EPA's Office of Groundwater & Drinking Water; and Dr. Andrew Sawyers, Director of EPA's Wastewater Office.

This was followed up with a terrific meeting with Congressman Paul Tonko, who has been a true champion for Rural Water and

this entire industry of water and wastewater professionals. Rep. Tonko has been bringing attention to the aging infrastructure issues we are all facing by conducting walking tours in his district highlighting the problem and holding roundtable discussions on the issues with elected officials and local operators. He is also consistently on the news advocating for more funding for our aging infrastructure. Rep. Tonko was the original cosponsor on the Grassroots Rural and Small Communities Water System Assistance Act which passed, and is now cosponsoring a Dear Colleague letter to ensure this Act is enforced. We cannot thank Rep. Tonko enough for supporting the Bill and conducting a hearing for the Committee on Energy & Commerce highlighting our issues and for being our champion.



As we continued to move from office to office to share our message, our success, and our requests we were fortunate to have many favorable responses from each office, including our Senators. Their support is essential to the continuation of these services you receive from our field staff daily.

Another great meeting was with Congressman Chris Gibson discussing our programs and the current critical water situation in Hoosick Falls, NY. Rep. Gibson has been to several meetings in Hoosick Falls to find solutions and to help those private citizens with wells that are contaminated and the village's supply.

So as the appropriations process continues, we will be reaching out to our members for their support of these important programs that provide the funding to keep our field staff available to you at a moment's notice to address your emergency situations, your project needs, your compliance concerns, and meeting your training needs with recertification contact hours. 💧💧💧