

**New York City Department of Environmental Protection  
Bureau of Water Supply**

**Report on East of Hudson Septic Repair Program Participation**

**March 2018**

*Prepared in accordance with Section 4.9 of the NYSDOH  
2017 Filtration Avoidance Determination*



Prepared by: DEP, Bureau of Water Supply



Pursuant to Section 4.9 of the Revised 2007 Filtration Avoidance Determination, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) established the East of Hudson (EOH) Septic System Rehabilitation Reimbursement Program to provide funding to reimburse home owners a portion of the costs to repair or remediate eligible failing septic systems, or to connect those systems to existing sewage collection systems.

The New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) administers the EOH Septic Repair Program with funding provided by DEP. The program was initially available to eligible residences in priority areas within the West Branch and Boyd Corners basins in 2015. The program was expanded in 2016 to become available to eligible residences with financial need in priority areas within the Cross River and Croton Falls Reservoir basins.

The 2017 Filtration Avoidance Determination requires DEP to review the methods used to inform EOH Septic Repair Program participants of the program's availability and to propose ways to improve education and outreach to enhance participation.

### **Existing Structure and Participation**

As with other septic repair programs funded by DEP, participation in the EOH Septic Repair Program is voluntary. When the program was first initiated, DEP notified key staff from local municipalities, including town supervisors and planning departments. DEP also notified and discussed the program with regulatory staff from county health departments in Westchester, Putnam, and Dutchess Counties. The purpose of this contact was to inform local officials about the existence of the program, provide copies of program documents, and answer questions.

After all local officials were notified, EFC mailed an initial notification letter to each resident within the eligible areas to announce the program. The mailing included information about the availability of funding, a brief fact sheet describing program parameters, and the individual points of contact with DEP and EFC. Through EFC, DEP continues to conduct direct follow up mailings annually to all eligible residents to promote participation in the program.

DEP continues to work with EFC to disseminate information about the program to local municipal staff and licensed septic contractors as system rehabilitations are completed. Most residents learn about the program through DEP's annual mailing. Residents are also informed about the program through county regulatory staff or septic contractors familiar with the program. EFC maintains a website (<https://www.efc.ny.gov/EOH>) with program information and routinely fields phone inquiries. DEP also maintains information about the program on its own website ([www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/watershed\\_protection/septic\\_systems.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/watershed_protection/septic_systems.shtml)).

### **Education and Outreach to Maintain and Enhance Participation**

Certain strategies have already been effective in disseminating information about the EOH Septic Program and encouraging participation. These strategies will continue moving forward and include:

1. Conduct direct mailings each spring to the thousands of eligible residents;
2. Maintain information on the EFC website;
3. Maintain information on the DEP website; and
4. Ensure regular communication with staff at county health departments.

The following strategies will be implemented in an attempt to ensure that eligible residents and all facets of the inspection and enforcement chain are aware of the reimbursement program:

1. As part of local compliance with New York State Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems Permit (GP-0-15-003), each Town located EOH is required to track pump outs, inspections, septic failures, and remedial activities. DEP will identify and reach out to the MS4 or code officer in each municipality in the focus area to brief them on the Program's structure and provide contact information.
2. Contact individual town supervisors and town boards to remind them about the program. DEP will re-engage with the supervisors in all eligible towns, as well as other key staff such as town planners and engineers, to remind them about the existence of the program and to answer questions. DEP will suggest face-to-face meetings with local officials to further explain the value and importance of the program and to promote participation.
3. Distribute program literature in public places such as town halls and other municipal offices. At a minimum, and with permission, DEP will place fact sheets in town halls and/or libraries in the Program area. The fact sheets will include a brief description of the program and contact information.
4. In addition to the annual mailing to each and every eligible participant, DEP will direct EFC to send an additional mailing to eligible property owners in the event that DEP issues a referral of a possible failure to the respective County health Department.