

**PRESS RELEASE FROM
PRESIDING OFFICER DUWAYNE GREGORY**



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Capital Budget Debt Reduction Committee Proposes Plan to Cut \$80 Million in Debt

The Suffolk County Legislature's bipartisan Capital Budget Debt Reduction Committee, established by Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory is proposing a plan to cut \$80 million in so-called "pipeline debt." Legislation authorizing the reduction was laid on the table at today's Legislature meeting.

"In reviewing the capital budget earlier this year it became clear to us that we had to take action to cut the county's pipeline debt," said PO Gregory. "We can't just piling up debt that must be paid in future years by our children and their young families. That puts an unfair burden on taxpayers in the coming years. The debt reduction committee is protecting Suffolk County taxpayers, and this is only the first step in that effort."

"I am pleased that this bipartisan process will reduce debt and save tens of millions in taxpayer dollars," County Executive Steve Bellone said. "It is refreshing to have a process that is singularly focused on how we cut—not add—spending."

The debt reduction committee was formed in June to reduce the county's \$429 million in pipeline debt, projects for which the legislature has approved funding but has not yet been borrowed. The \$80 million reduction was accomplished by a line-by-line review of capital projects and eliminating some projects and recovering leftover money from completed projects.

Members of the committee included Legislators Gregory, Al Krupski, John Kennedy, Tom Cilmi and Rob Calarco, as well as Deputy County Executive Jon Schneider, County Executive Steve Bellone's chief budget officer, Connie Corso, and Department of Public Works Commissioner Gil Anderson.

The two biggest savings came from shelving the legacy environmental land acquisition program (\$19.9 million) and the multifaceted land purchase program (\$8.8 million). That loss will be offset by a referendum this November where the public will have the opportunity to support providing \$20 million for land acquisition and clean water protection.

The committee also cut \$5.2 million set for a refurbishment of the old Fourth Precinct headquarters for use by the District Attorney. The latest plan is for the DA to move to the Dennison

building. Many other projects had smaller cuts during the exhaustive review of capital projects by the committee.

“The legislation we are laying on the table is a great example of what the legislative and executive branches can do working together to protect the taxpayers of Suffolk County,” said PO Gregory.