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Residential Wastewater Treatment Grant, Distinguished Youth Award, Renewable Energy Task Force Creation and Anti- Nepotism Law on Legislative Agenda

RIVERHEAD, N.Y. – Members of the Suffolk County Legislature are expected to vote tomorrow, May 16, to establish the “Residential Innovative and Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Grant Assistance Program,” thereby making available financial assistance to homeowners to replace an existing septic or cesspool system with a wastewater treatment system. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. in Riverhead.

The Program will allow residents to apply for up to \$11,000 in grant assistance to defer the costs associated with the design, purchase and installation of an I/A OWTS. Each year, beginning in 2017 and through 2021, \$2 million in funding from the Assessment Stabilization Reserve Fund will be appropriated for distribution.

Homeowners can apply for up to \$11,000 provided: a) the federal adjusted gross income of a married couple filing a joint tax return is less than \$300,000; b) the combined federal adjusted gross income of a property owner who is married but files an individual tax return is less than \$300,000; or c) the federal adjusted gross income of a property owner who is not married and files a single tax return is less than \$300,000.

Homeowners can also apply for a grant in the amount of \$5,500 provided: a) the federal adjusted gross income of a property owner who is married and filing a joint tax return is \$300,000 or greater but less than \$500,000; b) the combined federal adjusted gross income of a property owner who is married and filing an individual tax return is \$300,000 or greater but less than \$500,000; or c) the federal adjusted gross income of a property owner who is not married and filing single is greater than \$300,000 but less than \$500,000.

Residents applying for grant funding must provide a valid certificate of occupancy, cannot be connected to a public or private sewer or be located within an existing sewer district, or use the home as a place of business. Suffolk County employees, elected officials of New York State or any political subdivision are ineligible for the program as are properties with outstanding or open real property tax liens.

Legislators will also consider:

- Establishing a Suffolk County Distinguished Youth Award for residents between the ages of 13 and 18 that will recognize individuals within that age group as “becoming well rounded and more civically engaged individuals.” The program will be administered by Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory with voluntary participation by legislative district offices. According to Presiding Officer Gregory the award will be modeled after the Congressional Youth Award and encourage achievement in young residents by achieving 200 hours of community service and 100 hours of physical fitness over the course of a year;
- Developing a comprehensive renewable energy construction plan for Suffolk County which includes creating a Renewable Energy Task Force charged with conducting surveys of all available public and privately held land in the County to develop a list of parcels suitable for renewable energy production;
- Strengthening and updating provisions in the anti-nepotism law to clarify wording;
- Authorizing the purchase of two trucks and the creation of four positions in the Health Department to assist with administering the Innovative Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems program.

Public Hearings will include:

- Increasing the maximum amount to be expended for improving facilities for Suffolk County Sewer District 18 – Hauppauge Industrial;
- Increasing the maximum amount to be expended for improving facilities for Suffolk County Sewer District 23 – Coventry Manor;
- Elimination of the Cremation Approval Fee;
- Requiring departmental justification of proposed fee increases;
- Implementing a one-year rolling debt policy to mitigate the budgetary shortfall;
- Enacting a Campaign Finance Report Act to limit campaign contributions from County Contractors and Public Employee Unions.

Legislators will also set a June 6, Public Hearing date for the Suffolk County Community College Budget. For additional information, please visit <http://legis.suffolkcountyny.gov>.

