

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior Recently Approved Funding

Middletown, NY - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that he's secured initial approval of \$800,000 in federal funding for upgrades and replacements to the city's water and sewer infrastructure. The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, of which Hinchey is a member, last week approved the funds as part of the Fiscal Year 2009 Interior Appropriations bill. The full House Appropriations Committee is expected to approve the funds this week. The measure will then still have several legislative steps to go, but having the funds included in the original version of the bill is considered a critical step in the process. The funds may also face a challenge from President Bush who has said he opposes the inclusion of funding for such projects.

"In order to continue basic water and wastewater services to the residents and business of the city, and to support the continued economic development and growth of this community, it is vital that we continue to update and improve the Middletown's aging infrastructure," Hinchey said. "Many aspects of the drinking water and sanitary sewer system within the City of Middletown date back several decades and in some cases, a century or more. We often take this infrastructure for granted until storm surges overflow sewage into public streets or drinking water fails to meet health standards. The city is working diligently to prevent such scenarios from occurring and these federal funds will help achieve that goal."

Several years ago, Hinchey obtained \$450,000 in federal funds for the city's new water package plant, which is now incorporated into Middletown's larger water plant revitalization and reconstruction. The city will use the \$800,000 Hinchey is working to secure now to help upgrade many of its sanitary sewer lines, replace drinking water transmission mains, and also construct a new wastewater facility that will comply with Department of Environmental Conservation regulations and protect both the environment and public health. The current plant can no longer meet its discharge requirements under DEC permits and needs to be replaced in the near future.

"Making these needed updates and replacements is of course a very expensive proposition and one that is a significant economic burden to businesses and residents in Middletown, as it is in

so many of our older communities throughout the Hudson Valley," Hinchey said. "I strongly oppose the Bush administration's attempt to radically cut funding for domestic needs like the Middletown infrastructure project and will work extremely hard to obtain final approval of these funds, which will relieve local taxpayers of the full cost associated with this important project."

Joining Hinchey for the announcement of the funding were local officials, including Middletown Mayor Marlinda Duncanson, Department of Public Works Commissioner Jacob Tawil, and members of the Middletown Common Council.