



## Legislation Text

**File #:** Res 1174-2000, **Version:** \*

Preconsidered Res. No. 1174

Resolution calling upon Governor George E. Pataki to help safeguard the quality of the New York City water supply by directing the New York State Department of Transportation to abandon its plans for the expansion of Routes 120 and 22 in the immediate vicinity of the Kensico Reservoir and to advance necessary traffic and safety improvements for Interchanges 2 and 3 on Interstate Highway 684 in a way that minimizes disruption to and assures the protection of the Kensico Reservoir watershed.

By the Speaker (Council Member Vallone) and Council Member Michels, Robles, Carrion, Sabini, Marshall, Freed, Miller, Malave-Dilan, Eisland, Henry, Lasher, Lopez, Nelson, Perkins, Warden; also Council Members DiBrienza, Fisher, Foster, Harrison, Koslowitz, Leffler, McCaffrey, Pinkett and Rodriguez.

Whereas, The New York City water supply, including its 19 upstate reservoirs and their watersheds, is a priceless and irreplaceable resource supplying drinking water to nine million residents of New York City and Westchester County; and  
Whereas, The Kensico Reservoir, located three miles north of White Plains in the Westchester town of North Castle, is perhaps the most critical part of the New York City water supply system as water from the Catskill and Delaware systems - 90% of New York City's water supply - is delivered to the Kensico Reservoir before moving on to consumers in the City and lower Westchester County; and  
Whereas, The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has proposed three separate expansion projects along these fragile watershed lands close to the Kensico Reservoir; and  
Whereas, Among the alternatives proposed for this project are turning the Route 22/120 overlap immediately adjacent to the Kensico Reservoir into an 85-foot-wide expressway, with a new six-lane bridge over the reservoir itself; expanding a significant stretch of Route 120 north of Westchester County Airport, significantly widening much of the existing road just uphill from the reservoir; and enlarging Interchange 2 on Interstate 684 (Westchester County Airport exit), relocating nearby sections of Route 120, as well as altering Interchange 3 (Armonk exit) and widening adjacent Route 22, but amongst the variety of alternatives, there is a no-build alternative that can be implemented; and  
Whereas, According to the NYSDOT's Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) these proposed expansion projects would result in a variety of adverse impacts for the Kensico watershed, including the destruction of almost four acres of natural wetlands; the creation of approximately ten acres of new paved surfaces; the temporary or permanent removal and disturbance of between sixty-two and sixty-six acres of upland vegetation; and the taking of an undetermined number of acres of New York City-owned watershed buffer lands; and  
Whereas, Again, according to the NYSDOT's SDEIS, the proposed Kensico highway expansion projects would also generate additional pollutants in the Kensico watershed with the new road surfaces flushing up to 82.5% more of eight major pollutants during future rainstorms, than occurs from the existing roadways; and  
Whereas, Although the NYSDOT has stated that it proposed these projects to alleviate traffic congestion and increase driver safety, highway building and expansion projects historically attract additional traffic and increased development; and  
Whereas, The SDEIS for the proposed Kensico highway projects fails to conclusively establish traffic safety or congestion conditions justifying the expansions of Routes 120 or 22 or that recent enhancements and the possible addition of traffic lights and stop signs could not adequately address whatever traffic needs may remain for Routes 120 and 22 in the vicinity of the Kensico Reservoir; and  
Whereas, According to the NYSDOT's SDEIS, as much as 1.2 million square feet of additional commercial office space might be developed along the Route 120 corridor in the future, in addition to further residential subdivision growth, and the expanded highways would help transform local roadways into regional thoroughfares; and  
Whereas, Currently under our watershed protection program, New York City has secured a five-year filtration avoidance determination (FAD) for its Catskill/Delaware water supply from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), which enables the City to avoid constructing a filtration plant estimated to cost \$6 to \$8 billion with an additional hundreds of millions of dollars to operate each year; and  
Whereas, The Council believes that these expansion projects are unnecessary and unwarranted and would impose potentially huge environmental and economic burdens on New York City residents because if the City fails to adequately protect the Kensico Reservoir, the filtration avoidance waiver will be jeopardized; and  
Whereas, If development around the reservoir continues, there undoubtedly will be less open space, fewer natural wetlands, more parking lots and impervious surfaces, more through-traffic and more corporate and residential development; and  
Whereas, A 1999 National Academy of Sciences report prepared by the National Research Council, which reviewed New York City water supply issues, has warned that "new commercial development and road expansion in the Kensico watershed may threaten water quality in this reservoir in the near future"; and  
Whereas, The USEPA, in testimony before this Council, recently reiterated its position that "EPA is very concerned about the impacts that this project may have on the Kensico reservoir, and ultimately, on EPA's FAD for the Catskill and Delaware watershed" and identified "the Kensico reservoir and its watershed as the weakest link in the chain of filtration avoidance"; and

Whereas, While today water in the Kensico Reservoir meets state and federal water quality standards, if development and land use changes continue, New York City may not be able to continue to meet these standards and maintain its obligations pursuant to the FAD and the watershed agreement signed by the City and the State as well as other parties; now, therefore, be it  
Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon Governor George E. Pataki to help safeguard the quality of the New York City water supply by directing the New York State Department of Transportation to abandon its plans for the expansion of Routes 120 and 22 in the immediate vicinity of the Kensico Reservoir and to advance necessary traffic and safety improvements for Interchanges 2 and 3 on Interstate

Highway 684 in a way that minimizes disruption to and assures the protection of the Kensico Reservoir watershed.  
Referred to the Committee on Environmental Protection.

[1013]

[1013]