



## Notes

### Interstate Environmental Commission Annual Meeting

Thursday, March 6th, 2025

**Please note:** All voting items are indicated by an \*

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#### **1. Call to order and Roll Call**

Commissioners in attendance: John Scagnelli (Chair, NJ); Philip DeGaetano (Vice-Chair, NY); John Atkin (Vice-Chair-CT); Patricia Bisacky (CTDPH); Christopher Kelly (CT AGO); Loel Muetter (NJDOH); Jeffrey Myers (NY-Treasurer); Nisha Patel (CTDEEP); Selvin Southwell (NYSDEC); Rose Trentman (NY); Virginia Wheatley (NJDOH)

Also in attendance: Michael Flood, EPA Region 2; Michael Eleneski, NJ GAU; Evelyn Powers, IEC.

#### **2. Approval of Minutes from the September 4th, 2024 Quarterly Meeting (Appendix A)\***

Evelyn Powers presented the minutes from the September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 quarterly meeting as well as notes from the of the December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025 quarterly meeting, and summaries of the January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Executive Committee meetings. A motion was made to approve the September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 quarterly meeting minutes amongst those in attendance and to continue the meeting to enable a vote to be obtained by Robert Schuster. A motion, duly made and seconded to approve the minutes from the September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Commission meeting was approved. Robert Schuster (NJDEP) later voted in favor of approving the minutes on Friday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

- a. December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Quarterly Meeting Notes (Appendix B)
- b. January 8<sup>th</sup> 2025 Executive Committee Meeting Summary (Appendix C)
- c. February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Executive Committee Meeting Summary (Appendix D)

#### **3. Director's Report**

- a. Project Highlights and Updates:

- NYSDEC Long Island Sound Septic Replacement Project

Evelyn updated the Commission on progress and status of the Septic System Replacement Project. Evelyn has been working closely with the Executive Committee, especially Chair Scagnelli and Vice-Chair DeGaetano, as well as a Glen Bruening, IEC's contract attorney, to draft and execute contracts with Nassau County and Suffolk County. Chair Scagnelli and Commissioner DeGaetano emphasized that both county contracts are protective of the Commission in the event of any disruption in the flow of funds from NYSDEC. Evelyn expects that county contracts to be finalized in the coming weeks. IEC may also work with NYSDEC to revise the workplan to enable IEC to contract directly with the Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District, which both Nassau County and NYSDEC agreed would be preferable,

more efficient, and expedite the implementation of the program and installation and replacement of eligible septic systems in Nassau county. Evelyn also reported IEC received the \$515,625 advance payment from NYSDEC, representing 25% of the first year's funding. The advance is being held in a separate account and will be drawn down to fund administrative costs incurred by IEC and reimbursements to the counties.

- NJDEP Harbor Monitoring Project

NJDEP Harbor Monitoring program is on a monthly schedule currently, as is our Long Island Sound monitoring program. Year 5 will begin in May, when weekly monitoring will resume.

- NYSDEC-604b Harbor Monitoring

The NYSDEC-604b funded Harbor Monitoring Project will resume in April (2<sup>nd</sup> year of monitoring) with weekly monitoring at 10 sides on the NY side of the Harbor. Year two contract (August 1, 2025-July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026) was executed in February. Funding remains essentially level with year one \$131,925.

- Long Island Sound Monitoring Projects

IEC's LIS western LIS water quality monitoring is currently on a monthly schedule, with weekly monitoring to resume in May. IEC's participation in the Unified Water Study (involving bi-weekly monitoring of Little Neck Bay and Manhasset Bay), coordinated by Save the Sound, is also set to resume in May.

- NYCDEP/Brooklyn College Alley Creek and Bergen Basin Project

Monitoring in conjunction with the NYCDEP/Research Foundation of CUNY- funded nature-based solutions in Alley Creek and Bergen Basin is currently on hold. Planned monitoring was completed in December and all invoices have been paid. Additional funding is anticipated to be available to resume monitoring after July 1<sup>st</sup>, in line with the NYC budget cycle.

- Compliance Monitoring Inspections

IEC is updating its Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) covering Compliance monitoring inspections. Inspections are on hold pending re-approval of the QAPP.

- Coordinated Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program

IEC's coordinated Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program is set to resume in May. Ruby Alcorn, a 2024 seasonal intern, was hired as a full-time Environmental Analyst in December to coordinate the program. Samantha Wilder has taken over coordination of IEC's western Long Island Sound monitoring programs.

- Communications

Remy Freeman, a 2024 seasonal intern, was hired as a full-time Environmental Analyst in December to coordinate IEC's communications efforts, as well as support IEC's various monitoring programs. Remy has updated IEC's annual state summaries, has made numerous updates to the website, and will be posting updates related to IEC's monitoring, outreach and education and related programs on IEC's social medial platforms. Remy will also be working toward more regular email newsletters and

additional website content, including interactive maps and additional pages dedicated to IEC's expanded monitoring programs.

- On-site Laboratory Assessments by Accrediting Authorities.

IEC completed two on-site assessments by accrediting authorities. NJDEP Office of Quality Assurance performed an on-site (field) assessment of IEC on December 17<sup>th</sup>, and NYSDOH Environmental Laboratory Approval Program performed a two-day on-site assessment on January 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. IEC responded to the deficiencies cited in both assessments, which primarily related to updates required to IEC's standard operating procedures. All documentation of corrective actions were submitted to the applicable accrediting authorities by February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Evelyn also noted that Environmental Laboratory Approval renewal packages were submitted to NYSDOH ELAP for the 2025-2026 permit year and to CTDPH for the 2025-2027 biennial renewal.

#### **4. IEC Finances and Current Grant Funds Update**

- a. Updated FY24 Statement of Financial Activity and Balance Sheet (Appendices E and F)
- b. FY25 YTD Statement of Financial Activity and Balance Sheet (Appendices G and H)

Evelyn distributed updated FY 24 financials (FYE 9/30/2024) as well as FY25 YTD financial statements. Evelyn and Jeff Myers (IEC Treasurer) reviewed the financials prior to the meeting. Evelyn highlighted that accounts receivables has decreased (from \$530K in September 2024 to \$215K in December 2024) as payments for some outstanding invoices have been received. Reconciliations that remain pending for FY24 relate to indirect expenses, as well as some outstanding invoices.

#### **c. Funding and Grants Update**

Evelyn updated the Commission on the status of awarded or pending federal and state awards:

Ongoing or Pending Awards:

#### **Federal Grants**

- CWA §106 FFY 22 Closeout process

IEC's CWA §106 FFY22 award's project and budget period closed 9/30/2022. Evelyn is working with Michael Flood and EPA grants to close out the award (closeout notice subsequently received on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025). Additional federal awards and balances reviewed:

- CWA §106 FFY 23 assistance agreement (\$485,905 remaining as of 2/26/25)
- CWA §106 FFY 24 assistance agreement (Full award of \$727,000 available)
- CWA §106 FFY 25 assistance agreement workplan and budget submission timeline:

Evelyn reviewed the timeline for IEC's CWA §106 FFY25 assistance application submission, which must be submitted to grants.gov by April 30<sup>th</sup>.

- LISS FFY24 Base Program Budget Request (\$714,135 awarded December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024)
- LISS FFY25 Base Budget Request Submission (\$1,532,590, Submitted to LISS Management Committee November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024)
- LISS Remaining Funding (\$2,006,753 as of 2/26/2025)

Evelyn noted a substantial amount of IEC's remaining LIS funding is related to the Pathogen Monitoring Network, which was forward funded for two years (FY24-FY25) in FY23. The budget includes subawards to monitoring groups as well as analytical services to cover analytical expenses related to pathogen indicator samples collected from throughout Long Island and Connecticut.

Patricia Bisacky inquired whether any of IEC's federal funding was Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding. Evelyn explained that IEC's direct federal funding is not related to BIL, however, the pass-through funding awarded from NYSDEC for the Septic System Replacement Program was BIL-funding originally awarded from EPA's Long Island Sound Office to NYSDEC.

#### State Grants

- NJDEP Harbor Monitoring Project  
Year 5 MOA May 1, 2025-April 30, 2026. Spending Plan/Budget TBD)
- NYSDEC Septic System Replacement (4-year contract, \$8,250,000 in Funding, approximately \$689,984 to IEC to administer program. \$515,625 advance received February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025)
- NYSDEC 604b Funding Year 2 Workplan and Budget approved (\$131K), contract executed, monitoring set to resume April 1, 2025.

#### Local and Private Grants

- Brooklyn College (CUNY) and NYCDEP Alley Creek/Bergen Basin Project FY24-FY25 subaward and work complete, invoices paid (\$104,832)
- Friends of +Pool TBD
- Save the Sound- Unified Water Study (~\$46,000, May 2025-November 2025)

#### d. State Appropriations

Commissioner DeGaetano updated the Commission on efforts to impact the NYS SFY25-26 appropriation to IEC. The Governor's Executive Budget, released in January 2025, included an appropriation of \$41,600 to IEC. IEC submitted written testimony to the NYS Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Environmental Conservation and is working with NGO on legislative outreach to key legislators to encourage the senate and assembly to restore funding to the SFY24-25 level of \$96,600.

### **5. Laboratory/Office Update**

#### a. Update on Staffing and Current Laboratory Operations

Evelyn posted summer internships on IEC's website, as well as on social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram) and via Handshake with good response. Evelyn re-posted the job openings for the Office Administrator and Septic System Replacement Program Administrator.

**6. Old Business**

- a. Commissioner vacancies

**7. New Business**

Commissioner DeGaetano noted that the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Commission is in 2026 and the Commission should plan an appropriate event and include our partners, outreach to legislators. Patricia Bisacky inquired whether the June and December meetings were still in-person meetings. Evelyn confirmed that the June and December meetings would remain in-person/hybrid.

**8. Upcoming Meetings**

Wednesday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (in-person/hybrid)

Wednesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025

Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 (in-person/hybrid)

**9. Adjourn**

**APPENDICES:**

- A- September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Quarterly Meeting Minutes
- B- December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Quarterly Meeting Summary
- C- January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Executive Committee Meeting Summary
- D- February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Executive Committee Meeting Summary
- E- Updated FY24 Statement of Financial Activity
- F- Updated FY24 Statement of Financial Position
- G- FY25 YTD Statement of Financial Activity
- H- FY25 YTD Balance Sheet