

January 2026

# Interstate Environmental Commission

## Working For New York



### About Us

*The Interstate Environmental Commission (IEC) is a tri-state agency committed to protecting, conserving, and restoring New York's environment, particularly in the area of water quality. One of IEC's most valuable resources is its independent, accredited environmental laboratory. IEC's laboratory primarily analyzes non-potable water samples collected throughout the tri-state area in conjunction with coordinated projects designed to support IEC's mission. The laboratory holds primary National Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (NELAP) accreditation through the Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (ELAP) of the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH).*



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### How We Are Funded

According to the IEC's Tri-State Compact, each member state must appropriate funds to support the IEC. In the 2025 fiscal year, New York appropriated \$41,600, or 0.48%, of IEC's total funding from its state fiscal year budget, less than half of IEC's appropriation request of \$96,323. While the majority of IEC's funding comes from federal grants, state appropriations are critical for IEC to meet the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 106 grant non-federal match requirement.

### Education and Public Information

IEC participates in and welcomes opportunities to collaborate with educators, organizations, and the public to promote awareness of water quality issues and environmental stewardship. In 2025, IEC participated in two marine science festivals-SubMerge, coordinated by **Hudson River Park Trust**, and City of Water Day, coordinated by **Waterfront Alliance** and **New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program** (HEP). In addition, IEC hosted its third annual open house and welcomed tours to science professionals, artists, and partners. Staff presented posters at various water quality events throughout the year and participated in multiple conferences, including BioBAT's Currents of Change symposium and the annual HEP conference.



### Partnerships

IEC actively participates in many stakeholder initiatives, workgroups, and committees to enhance communication and coordination of water quality efforts within the region. These include the HEP Management Committee and Water Quality Workgroup, the **Long Island Sound Partnership** (LISP) Management Committee, the LISP Science and Technical Advisory Committee, as well as several LISP workgroups.

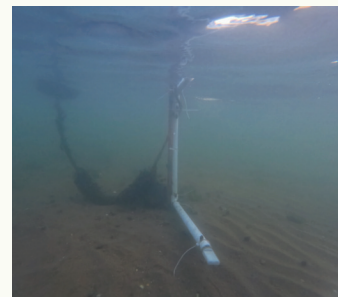
### NYS Septic System Replacement Fund

The Septic System Replacement Fund Program, supported by EPA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding passed through **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation** (NYSDEC) to IEC, provides financial assistance to eligible homeowners in Nassau and Suffolk County to aid in replacing septic systems or cesspools that impair water quality in the Long Island Sound (LIS) watershed. Conventional discharge systems have been identified as a significant source of nitrogen pollution in the LIS watershed, and new septic systems can reduce nitrogen output by up to 80%, improving water quality in the Sound. This funding mechanism provides an additional funding source to supplement the existing New York State and County programs for the installation of advanced nitrogen-reducing septic systems, providing up to \$10,000 for eligible participants. As of January 2026, 8 septic systems have been installed in Nassau County, with 68 more on the way. This project supports LISP's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP).



## NY-NJ HEP Eelgrass Restoration

In conjunction with HEP, EPA, and **Stony Brook University**, IEC is monitoring the success of eelgrass plants planted by Stony Brook University adjacent to the Living Breakwaters on the southern coast of Staten Island. Success was measured using habitat and water quality parameters in the summer and fall of 2025 and will resume in the spring of 2026. Eelgrass has several vital functions in aquatic ecosystems and can improve water quality and habitat stability. This study will help determine if environmental conditions can support further eelgrass restoration in the NY-NJ Harbor.



## Long Island Sound Monitoring

Since 1991, IEC has conducted water quality sampling surveys in support of the Long Island Sound Partnership. In 2025, LISP celebrated 40 years with a new name, a new logo, and a new CCMP, establishing “goals, objectives, and actions for the next 10 years to further restore and protect the Sound.” IEC’s participation in LIS monitoring contributes to this updated CCMP. Staff monitor dissolved oxygen (DO), as well as parameters that may influence DO, in the New York waters of the Long Island Sound, its embayments, and the Upper East River. Over the years, the scope of these surveys has expanded to include additional stations, year-round surveying, and added parameters to assess coastal acidification. IEC disseminates weekly survey summaries to stakeholders and produces a season summary with the **Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection** (CTDEEP), which are available on IEC’s website. In 2025, through funding provided by LISP, IEC received a subaward to support **Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor’s** core monitoring, which conducts testing at 21 sites in Hempstead Harbor and Glen Cove Creek. Since 2017, IEC has also participated in the **Unified Water Study**, coordinated by **Save the Sound, Inc.**, performing water quality monitoring in Little Neck Bay and Manhasset Bay. Learn more about the results of this study at: [www.savethesound.org/water-monitoring-ecological-health](http://www.savethesound.org/water-monitoring-ecological-health).



## LIS Pathogen Monitoring Network

While long-term monitoring programs of the ecological health of the open waters and embayments of Long Island Sound are well-established, a data gap exists for pathogen indicators. In 2023, through funding provided by LISP, IEC piloted a Pathogen Monitoring Network across Long Island Sound embayments and tributaries. The network, developed in conjunction with NYSDEC and CTDEEP, recruits watershed-based groups to collect samples for pathogens, which are analyzed by a state-certified environmental laboratory. The program seeks to build a coordinated, geographically strategic monitoring network for fecal indicator bacteria in the Sound. As of 2025, this program includes 9 groups in 17 waterbodies across NY and CT.

## NYSDEC 604b

In response to the NYSDEC update to water quality standards to include secondary contact recreation regulations, IEC launched the New York Harbor Monitoring Program funded by NYSDEC through CWA Section 604(b). 2025 marked the second recreational testing season, with weekly monitoring from April-October aiming to assess water quality at eleven sites, including one additional site added in 2025, affected by secondary contact criteria. These sites were selected for their lack of bacteriological data and proximity to public access points. This program compliments IEC’s **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection** funded **NY-NJ Harbor Monitoring Network**, which provides assessments of shared waters such as the Raritan Bay, Arthur Kill, Upper Bay, Lower Bay, Kill Van Kull, and the Hudson River.



## Support for Participatory Science

Since 2016, the volunteer monitoring, or participatory science, program has been an opportunity for community members to participate in ambient water quality monitoring surveys. Volunteers from community groups collect high-quality data with the help of IEC staff and laboratory services to better understand their local waters. Funded through IEC’s CWA Section 106 agreement awarded by EPA Region 2, this program targets public access areas not routinely monitored by established programs or agencies. In 2025, the program included five groups in New York: **Hudson River Park Trust**, **Freshkills Park Alliance**, **Billion Oyster Project**, **Friends of +POOL**, and **Gowanus Canal Conservancy**.