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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Costs to Maintain Clean Water, Control Pollution
In Westchester/Hudson Valley Soars to \$1 Billion: Report**

*As Clean Water Infrastructure Needs Escalate in Lower Hudson Valley,
Coalition Urges Lawmakers to Renew Clean/Waste Water Funding Legislation*

TARRYTOWN, NY (October 18, 2016)– More than a dozen of the region’s leading conservation and business organizations are calling on New York State lawmakers to increase funding to pay for clean water and wastewater infrastructure improvements in the Hudson Valley. The organizations, which have banded together under the moniker of the Clean Water Jobs Coalition, endorsed a report released today that identified nearly \$1 billion of public works projects needed to control pollution and protect drinking water in the region.

The Construction Industry Council of Westchester & Hudson Valley, Inc.(CIC), and the Construction Advancement Institute of Westchester & Mid-Hudson Region, Inc.(CAI), released the report that identifies the clean water infrastructure needs throughout the lower Hudson Valley based on a survey of municipalities and counties as well as a review of government reports. The report attached, “Clean Water Infrastructure Needs for Communities in Westchester County and the Hudson Valley,” documents current projects “ready to go” approaching \$250 million and further documents more than \$1 billion in wastewater and drinking water facility needs in total over the next five years. Long-term statewide clean water infrastructure needs remain in the tens of billions of dollars.

The report applauds the Governor and the New York State Legislature for the enactment of the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2015 and appropriations of \$425 million statewide to date to assist communities with Clean Water Grant Funds. However, with only \$175 million in this fund remaining for future grants, now is the time to allocate more public resources for the health and safety of our cities, towns and villages, the report said.

The theme for a public-awareness campaign, “*Invest in Clean Water – Invest in Jobs*,” resulted from the needs-analysis of this study. The campaign—launched by the CIC and CAI in alliance with members of the historic Clean Water/Jobs Coalition and the Clean Water Collaborative (members listed in the report)—calls for an additional \$800 million in clean water grant funds to be allocated statewide for this program in the coming FY 2017/2018 budget, which begins April 1, 2017.

The broad-based partnership brings together virtually every sector of stake holders on the issue: public policy organizations, construction contracting employers, labor unions, private employers and businesses, municipal leaders and environmental organizations to advocate for continuation and expansion of the state’s Clean Water Infrastructure program.

In addition to their environmental benefits, these programs lead to major positive impacts for local economies. In 2008, according to New York State’s own Clean Water Collaborative, it was estimated that for every billion dollars invested in clean water infrastructure projects, 30,000 to 47,000 direct and indirect jobs are created.

“These Clean Water funds are vital to the environmental and economic well-being of our region,” said Ross J. Pepe, President of the CIC and Executive Director of the CAI. “Our findings demonstrate that communities cannot do it alone and need the support of New York State to meet this challenge. It is vital that communities in our region take advantage of and apply for funds under these programs and work together with us to advocate for the program’s continuation and the allocations of more funds well into the future.”

Ned Sullivan, President of Scenic Hudson, said, "Continued investment in the region's water and wastewater infrastructure is crucial to the safety and health of our waters – for fishing, swimming and drinking and to meet the basic provisions of our environmental laws. These investments will create jobs, fuel and enable the region's economic growth, and contribute to the quality of life that makes the Hudson Valley and Westchester great places to live, work and enjoy the region's bounty."

Curt Johnson, Executive Director of Save the Sound, said, “The tens of thousands of families, who love to swim and boat along the Sound’s Westchester coast, want this funding to fix chronic sewage pollution. Our old deteriorating and leaking sewer pipes lead to frequent sewage spills. The cities, towns and villages along the coast need these state grants to design and fund essential sewer system repairs.”

Paul Gallay, President of Riverkeeper, said, “Investments in infrastructure are investments in clean water. We know from our own water quality data that the Hudson River Estuary and its tributaries are often safe for swimming – but not often enough. To improve water quality, the state must continue to expand this transformational grants program to help communities make these critical investments.”

Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment, said, “Wastewater upgrade requests are increasing each year throughout our state and we can no longer ignore this growing, essential need. Sewer treatment systems provide the strong foundation for propelling New York through the millennium with a viable plant that protects public health, our environment, our economy, recreational opportunities, home values and more. Every community and every person benefits from clean water. Sewer infrastructure funding represents an investment in New York’s sustainability.”

Marcia Bystryn, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters, said, "With water quality crises reaching a tipping point, we have been pleased that the State has begun to make the multi-year commitments in the budget that are necessary to address this critical issue. Such efforts must only be the

start, however, and we hope to see \$800 million in clean water grants allocated to this year's budget so that municipalities can fully protect our water by fixing crumbling pipes and sewers."

John Ravitz, Executive Vice President/COO of the Business Council of Westchester, said, "The Business Council of Westchester is laser focused on helping to create more jobs throughout the county. To do this we must clearly state to businesses that are considering Westchester that there is a strong commitment to do all we can to assure that the county's clean water infrastructure is healthy. The Business Council of Westchester will urge the Governor and the State Legislature in 2017 to provide the necessary funding to ensure that we are making the right investments in the area."

Jonathan Drapkin, President of Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, said, "We have seen in municipalities like the City of Newburgh that clean water and the ability to monitor and inspect its condition are critical for the well-being and health and safety of our communities. It is essential that we have a long-term plan and continued state grant funding for the rehabilitation of water infrastructure for the benefit of the residents of the Hudson Valley."

Mamaroneck Town Supervisor Nancy Seligson, said, "As a chief elected official I am very aware of the high costs facing the community to repair and improve aging sewer pipes. Fixing our sewer systems and pipes is needed to improve water quality in the Long Island Sound and to make sure it is always swimmable and fishable to all. Municipalities can't pay for these expensive repairs on their own and need regional and state-wide partnerships. I fully support increasing the funding for the state-wide clean water program."

Erin Crotty, Executive Director of Audubon New York, said, "Clean water is imperative to the health and vitality of the Hudson Valley's diverse communities and ecologically significant habitat, including the nearly two hundred bird species the area supports. As a founding member of the Clean Water/Jobs Coalition, Audubon New York understands that investments in our state's wastewater and drinking water infrastructure not only help safeguard our freshwater resources for people, birds, and wildlife, but also the economy. Audubon New York stands with our partners in urging the state to protect our waters not only in the Hudson Valley, but across New York State."

Survey results showed that, without clean water protections, municipalities cannot ensure that residents have a high quality of life and economic prosperity. The report states that New York State is faced today with an aging wastewater and drinking water infrastructure system. These facilities require retrofits, upgrading and expansion in local communities across the state.

The Lower Hudson Valley has its own set of challenges and needs. These facilities are vital to protecting area waterways and providing clean drinking water for residents farther south in New York City. In 2014, in its Federal Clean Watershed Needs Assessment, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reported that across New York State more than \$30 billion was needed in both wastewater treatment plant and drinking water facility improvements and investment over the next 20 years.

New York State, under the leadership of Gov. Andrew Cuomo and with Assemblyman Steve Otis (D-91st Rye/Port Chester) as a co-sponsor, created the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2015. In its first year, the Act provided \$75 million in clean water infrastructure grants to communities for capital projects with a \$5 million cap per community. In 2016, Gov. Cuomo and the State Legislature added an additional \$350 million in grant funds of which \$175 million was allocated state-wide in mid-2016. There is an additional \$175 million in grants that will be awarded in 2017.

Of the grants awarded to date, nearly \$35 million was given to 18 Westchester and Hudson Valley communities for both wastewater and drinking water facility capital projects. In addition to grants, these communities also received tens of millions of dollars in low-interest financing under New York State's Water Revolving Loan Fund. Both the grant program and the loan program are administered by NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation.

A copy of the report has been distributed to the Governor's office and leaders of the State legislature for their review and consideration. For additional information, please contact CIC and CAI headquarters, attention George Drapeau, in Tarrytown, NY at (914) 631-6070 or cicwhv@aol.com. The report will also be made available online at www.cicnys.org.

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About the Construction Industry Council of Westchester & Hudson Valley, Inc.

The Construction Industry Council of Westchester and Hudson Valley, Inc. is a professional trade organization representing more than 600 businesses that are at the core of the region's construction industry. These include contractors, suppliers, consultants and other professionals servicing the construction and building industries. CIC maintains day-to-day contact with local and state government officials who own and manage much of the region's infrastructure and institutional facilities.

About the Construction Advancement Institute of Westchester & Mid-Hudson, Inc.

The Construction Advancement Institute is a management initiative that aims to ensure the prosperity, safety and well-being of communities in Westchester and the Lower Hudson Valley. The CAI is affiliated with the Building Contractors Association of Westchester & Mid-Hudson Region, Inc., which represents some 50 employers and thousands of employees.