AN ACT to amend the public health law, the real property law and the state finance law, in relation to enacting the well water and water supply education act

New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) supports A.1194/S.1845 which would require the New York State Department of Health to establish and maintain public education programs on the potential health hazards associated with well water.

Approximately 1.9 million residents of New York State access water from private wells, so it is important that individuals understand the potential health risks and hazards of consuming well water.

Well water can become contaminated with runoff from human, animal, industrial, agricultural and other sources. According to the CDC, the top 6 causes for outbreaks in private water wells include Hepatitis A, Giardia, Campylobacter/E. coli, Shigella, Salmonella and toxic substances such as arsenic, gasoline, nitrate, phenol, and selenium. In many cases, contaminants may not change the color or odor of water, and may be undetectable unless the well water is tested.

Residents and home buyers need to be aware of the importance of regular testing, options for testing well water, and ways to share with local health authorities any test results that indicate excessive levels of contaminants. Furthermore, those with water wells need information on water treatment and on risks associated with floods or other situations which could contaminate a safe well. Education is important to protect the health of residents in areas served by private wells. Lastly, this ensures that individuals become responsible for testing their own wells to ensure their health.

NYSACHO supports this legislation, which would protect consumer safety and public health for individuals who access private well water across the state, and recommends it be enacted into law.

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