



**NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN**



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**TO MITIGATE POTENTIAL FLOODING THE NEW YORK CITY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WILL CONDUCT
LIMITED RELEASES OF WATER FROM THE ASHOKAN RESERVOIR**

County Executive Hein says, “For the first time ever the DEP requested permission from the DEC to conduct limited releases from the waste channel in consultation with Ulster County.”

Olivebridge — This morning the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) authorized the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to begin limited flood mitigation releases from the Ashokan Reservoir waste channel. These limited releases will provide greater storage capacity in the Reservoir reducing the potential for the Reservoir to spill during the forecasted storm activity in the coming days. The releases will decrease the severity of possible flooding on the lower Esopus should the Ashokan Reservoir spill. The releases have been authorized for a period of seven days or shorter but will be discontinued should flooding actually occur on the lower Esopus.

“For the first time ever the DEP requested permission from the DEC to conduct limited releases from the waste channel in consultation with Ulster County,” said Ulster County Executive Mike Hein. “This limited release represents a responsible operation of the waste channel as a powerful tool to provide flood mitigation. We will continue to fight for the proper management of the reservoir and against any negative impacts to the citizens along the lower Esopus.”

“Today the DEP and DEC have agreed that the water levels of the Ashokan Reservoir have warranted flood mitigation releases into the lower Esopus,” said Ulster County Department of the Environment Coordinator Amanda LaValle. “This decision by the DEC is an example of the system working to protect the people of Ulster County. This decision came after a collaborative discussion between the DEC, DEP, the New State Department of Health, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Ulster County.”

This action represents a more responsive approach to the management of the reservoir for flood mitigation. This level of cooperation is a direct result of the actions of the County Executive demanding accountability for previous unauthorized turbid releases. Unlike the previous turbid releases, this action represents a regulated approach designed to provide a

measure of protection from flooding along the lower Esopus, which has a specified end date.

Congressman Maurice Hinchey said, "I'm pleased that the DEP and DEC are working directly with local stakeholders in Ulster County to take proactive steps to mitigate flooding. This type of collaboration is essential and I'm hopeful it will become the model for how to address water management issues in and around the Ashokan Reservoir."

Senator John Bonacic said, "My office has been in contact with the DEP and told them they need to engage in flood mitigation now. In fact, they should have done it weeks ago. The best and only permanent solution is to mandate real voids in the reservoirs, so there is always room for inflow. The Senate has passed legislation to this effect. We will continue to urge the DEP to do better with their flood management duties, which is the minimum they owe the people of our region."

"This is how the process should work," said Assemblyman Pete Lopez. "Protecting residents and their property from flooding has been a long standing priority for me and I am very pleased that our collective efforts have prevailed and moved the City of New York to be a responsible neighbor."

"Over the last few years we have witnessed massive and unprecedented flood events throughout Upstate New York. Ulster County has been hit particularly hard, creating an enormous strain on residents, small businesses and the local government. The State and Federal government, working with our partners on the local level, New York City included, have made significant progress in addressing many of the challenges brought about by the recurring flooding that has threatened our region. Today's announcement by the DEP and DEC is proof that our efforts have been effective." said Assemblymember Kevin Cahill (D – Ulster / Dutchess)

Ulster County Legislator Brian Shapiro said, "This is the way things were supposed to happen in the first place. I am very pleased that the Executive's actions resulted in a positive outcome for the environment and property owners in Ulster County."

Ulster County Legislator Water Frey said, "I am encouraged that the DEP communicated with Ulster County before releasing water into the lower Esopus. It is important that the DEP use the waste channel only when absolutely necessary to protect the residents along the lower Esopus. It sets a tone for the future that we can work together with a respectful understanding of each others needs."