

ANDREW J. SPANO, Westchester County Executive  
JOSHUA LIPSMAN, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health  
SUSAN TOLCHIN, Director of Communications

**CONTACT: Caren Halbfinger**

**(914) 813-5013**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**(914) 813-5000 (After Hours)**

**January 14, 2008**

### **NEW WESTCHESTER SEPTIC SYSTEM LAW TAKES EFFECT JAN. 24**

To prevent ground and drinking water contamination, Westchester County will on Jan. 24 begin requiring contractors who pump out septic systems to file reports with the county's Health Department about every septic collection they make.

If a contractor sees that septic discharge has leached into the ground, he is obligated to report it. Contractors must file these reports with the property owner and the Health Department within three business days of the service or within 30 days for a routine pump-out visit.

This new legislation is intended to maintain the quality of the drinking water and ground water by enabling the Health Department to identify septic system failures more rapidly and to ensure their timely remediation.

"Good, clean drinking water is important to all of us and this is another way Westchester County is doing all it can to protect our water supply," said Westchester County Executive Andy Spano.

Starting Jan. 24, contractors who pump out septic systems must obtain a license from the Westchester County Health Department. The license costs \$100 and is good for two years. The reporting requirement is part of the licensing law.

"This new law will help our health inspectors identify, track and monitor septic system problems before they get out of hand so they can be appropriately remediated," said Dr. Joshua Lipsman, the Westchester County Health Commissioner. "It's in everyone's best interest to keep our drinking water clean."

About 40,000 homes in northern Westchester County are served by septic systems rather than public sewers. About 30,000 of these septic systems are within the New York City Watershed, which is a critical drinking water source for 85 percent of Westchester County residents.

**-30-**