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# COUNTY OF ERIE

**MARK C. POLONCARZ**

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

March 1, 2019

Erie County Legislature  
92 Franklin Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Buffalo, New York 14202

**Re: Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance Coordinator Budget Revision and Contract Extension through March 31, 2021**

Dear Honorable Members:

Please find enclosed a memorandum and proposed resolution from the Department of Environment and Planning authorizing the County Executive or Deputy County Executive to execute a budget revision and contract extension agreement with the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District to coordinate the Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact Deputy Commissioner Bonnie L. Lawrence at the Department of Environment and Planning. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.  
Erie County Executive

MCP/mmw  
Enclosure

cc: Thomas R. Hersey, Jr., Commissioner  
Bonnie L. Lawrence, Deputy Commissioner

## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature  
**From:** Department of Environment and Planning  
**Re:** Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance Coordinator Budget Revision and Contract Extension through March 31, 2021  
**Date:** March 1, 2019

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### **SUMMARY**

It is recommended that the Legislature approve the attached resolution prepared by the Department of Environment and Planning (DEP) authorizing the County Executive or Deputy County Executive to enter into an agreement with the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District (ECSWCD) in the amount of \$162,400 to have Joanna Panasiewicz, Senior Environmental Compliance Specialist (JG-12), continue to fulfill the role of Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance (LEWPA) Coordinator. ECSWCD is the recipient of funding from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund via the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) for the LEWPA Project, which involves a regional planning effort with Erie, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

100% of this position will be funded through the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

It is vital that the LEWPA project does not lose momentum as it is crucial to securing and managing funds to make improvements to water quality along the Lake Erie shoreline in New York State, as well as the associated watershed.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

ECSWCD has NYSDEC grant funding to support LEWPA – a three-county collaborative effort to better align our communities to improve the Lake Erie watershed and protect Lake Erie water quality. This effort includes funding for a LEWPA Coordinator position, which involves working with NYSDEC to develop and implement work plans and pursue funding for LEWPA watershed improvement initiatives.

Ms. Panasiewicz has been coordinating projects in the three counties, thus far resulting in 2,900 linear feet of streambank stabilization, 23 acres of ditches and highly erosive areas being hydro-seeded, 11 acres of invasive species management, 1,100 people being educated on aquatic invasive species prevention, three feasibility studies being completed in order to apply for additional implementation funds, and a plan for a watershed-wide bacteria sampling program.

Ms. Panasiewicz has been involved with LEWPA since its inception, and ECSWCD has contracted with DEP to coordinate LEWPA since 2012. Additional funds have been appropriated

from NYSDEC for this position to continue. The budget revision would add these funds to the existing budget and the contract extension would continue through March 31, 2021.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

Without the requested authorization, the LEWPA project will be delayed and will fall behind in its deliverables. Such a delay will result in lost opportunities to secure funding to make improvements to water quality along the Lake Erie shoreline in New York State, as well as the associated watershed. It will also result in the loss of momentum in developing a nine-element watershed management plan for the region, a priority for NYSDEC and necessary for certain Federal and State implementation funds for the region.

### **STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

The grant budget will be revised and the contract will be extended as indicated.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

RE: Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance Coordinator Budget Revision and Contract Extension through March 31, 2021

WHEREAS, the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning (DEP) has played a crucial role in water quality issues throughout the region for decades and continues to lead and manage many initiatives that protect and preserve our natural water resources; and

WHEREAS, the Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance (LEWPA) has been appropriated funds through the New York State Environmental Protection Fund through New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to coordinate and implement projects to improve the quality of the watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District (ECSWCD) is the Treasurer for LEWPA and is authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of LEWPA; and

WHEREAS, Erie County and ECSWCD entered into a contract from September 1, 2017 through March 31, 2019 (SAP Grant #162LEWPA1718) authorized by COMM. 13E-19 (2017) to create a position to coordinate LEWPA; and

WHEREAS, the ECSWCD wishes to extend the term of the contract to March 31, 2021 to retain an existing Senior Environmental Compliance Specialist position and make budget adjustments that will allow for successful completion of the scope of work.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the County Executive or the Deputy County Executive is hereby authorized to execute the necessary agreements with ECSWCD to extend the project until March 31, 2021; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the revenue from the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District is hereby appropriated in a grant account in the Department of Environment and Planning (Business Area 162, Fund 281) as follows:

Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance Project  
(Grant Period: 9/1/2017 – 3/31/2021)  
SAP Grant #162LEWPA1718

REVENUE:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Current Budget</u>	<u>Revision</u>	<u>Revised Budget</u>
409000	State Aid Revenue – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	(\$102,400)	(\$162,400)	(\$264,800)
TOTAL REVENUE				(\$264,800)

APPROPRIATIONS:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Current Budget</u>	<u>Revision</u>	<u>Revised Budget</u>
500000	Personnel Services	\$64,000	\$113,400	\$177,400
502000	Fringe Benefits	\$38,400	\$49,000	\$87,400
TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS		\$102,400	\$162,400	\$264,800

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Director of the Division of Budget and Management is hereby authorized to implement any budget adjustments as required to comply with Federal and local funding requirements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to the County Executive; the Director of the Division of Budget and Management; the County Attorney; the County Comptroller; Thomas R. Hersey, Jr., Commissioner of Environment and Planning; and Bonnie Lawrence, Deputy Commissioner of Environment and Planning.