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Schumer calls on EPA to clean Bethpage plume

by John Callegari

Published: September 20, 2011

Tags: [Bethpage](#), [BNPM092011](#), [contamination](#), [Long Island](#), [Northrop Grumman](#), [plume](#), [Ronkonkoma](#), [Sen. Charles Schumer](#), [U.S. Navy](#)

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[Sen. Charles Schumer](#) wants a toxic chemical plume in Bethpage threatening area drinking water cleaned up, and he wants it done now.

That was the message he delivered Monday to the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) after projections for remediation efforts on the part of the [U.S. Navy](#) pegged clean-up to be a four-year process. The Navy is responsible for causing the plume when it occupied land in Bethpage decades ago in conjunction with Grumman. Schumer said the plume threatens over 20 additional public drinking wells that serve over 250,000 Nassau County residents in the Massapequa, Bethpage and South Farmingdale water districts. Cleaning up the

plume is estimated to cost \$250 million, which local water districts could possibly shoulder if the Navy doesn't act quick enough.

"Times up," Schumer said. "We have prodded, cajoled, and pushed both the Navy and [Northrop] Grumman to get serious about this clean-up and move expeditiously before these toxins reach more local wells. If they aren't going to move full steam ahead and get this done before wells are actually contaminated, then the EPA needs to take the lead role and map out an aggressive containment plan. We cannot wait for more wells to be contaminated from industrial pollutions before we act."

Schumer sent a letter to EPA Director Lisa Jackson on Monday asking her agency to take the lead on remediation efforts.

[Northrop Grumman](#) officials responded to Schumer's claims, saying they had been undertaking remediation efforts for years.

"Northrop Grumman has invested over \$100 million toward our remediation efforts at our Bethpage site over the past 20 years," Northrop Grumman spokeswoman Dianne Baumert-Moyik said. "We continue those remediation efforts today under the guidance of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation which has responsibility for the project. We are also an active member of Senator Schumer's working committee and the senator has been very instrumental in engaging all key stakeholders. Northrop Grumman cannot speak for the U.S. Navy nor any other state or federal agency."

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