

Remember: *We Were Right!*

There are basically three tendencies that people in the water system have that are problematic, and need to be fixed, if we want to make things better.

The first is the tendency to Build something . . . a big tank a filter some sort of big steel and concrete machine to take care of the problem. There are many interests in the world that make this tendency a strong one but at \$3 billion to filter 10-30% of our water it should be resisted as vigorously as possible.

The second tendency is one result of the first and the reason we are here today. That is the tendency to see water rates as a blank check, not only for DEP but for the City budget in terms of the “rent” for the old infrastructure. There is little incentive in this system to economize. The need to decide among different wants when considering the use of scarce resources is the bedrock of our free market system. When that need to economize is removed, the system itself breaks down. Once again the Croton Filtration plant is a handy example. The existence of Federal Mandates that supposedly say “we must build”, are a reason but not a complete excuse for this tendency.

The third and most annoying tendency is the tendency not to listen to the ratepayers and citizens who are funding all of this. We turn up at hearings like this and tell you things and you go away and then come back to ‘explain’ it to us, as if all it would take for us to agree with you is to have it explained to us in words we poor foolish citizens could understand.

But that’s not so...we were right that a 450MGD capacity filter for Croton was too big, we were right that - if anything- you should instead build a smaller plant and pump additional water at Cross River and Croton Falls in times of drought without filtering it....we were right that the plant would never go in JPR, we were right that you couldn’t build something 20 feet high at the street and call it underground, we were right that you had to get state legislative approval to put it in the park, we were right

that it would cost more to put it there.

We're right now that using better management practices to handle storm water and resultant combined sewer overflows makes more sense than building tanks. We're right that the funding stream for taking care of wastewater and associated pollution is unfair. We're right that water rates are going up too fast and that the proposal before you should be rejected.

~Dart Westphal, May 2008 for the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ), www.bceq.org