

# NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Water, Region 9

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July 7, 2022

Rebecca Brumagin, Supervisor  
Town of Mina  
c/o Findley Lake Watershed Foundation  
P.O. Box 125  
Findley Lake, NY 14736

Dear Supervisor Brumagin and Town Board Members:

In 2021, the Town of Mina was awarded an Engineering Planning Grant from the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) to develop a Preliminary Engineering Report for a project to construct sanitary sewers and a new municipal wastewater treatment facility to serve the properties around Findley Lake.

DEC fully supports all efforts to sewer the lake. Findley Lake's best use is classified as fishing, with impairments to primary and secondary contact recreational activities (i.e., swimming and boating) caused by excessive phosphorus and low dissolved oxygen. Excessive phosphorus can also contribute to harmful algal blooms (HABs), which can produce potent cyanobacterial toxins that can poison pets and cause illnesses in humans. DEC documented HABs in Findley Lake in 2020 and 2021.

The 2008 "Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Phosphorus in Findley Lake" set phosphorus reduction goals and identified strategies to improve water quality. In the TMDL, it is documented that residential septic systems are responsible for 42 to 45 percent of the annual total phosphorus loading to Findley Lake. **The TMDL requires a 100 percent reduction in phosphorus loading from residential septic systems. The report recommends a systemic approach, such as the formation of a sewer district and the discharge of treated wastewater outside of the watershed.**

Alternative solutions, such as in-lake phosphorus treatment and/or replacement of failing septic systems, will not achieve the TMDL goal. Conventional septic systems are not designed to remove 100 percent of influent phosphorus, and the gravelly soils in the area and the proximity of the systems to the lake likely limit the amount of phosphorus removed through soil attenuation.

A significant amount of funding is currently available for clean water projects, including grants through DEC's Water Quality Improvement Program. TMDL projects are currently eligible to receive an award of up to \$10 million, with a 25 percent match requirement. Low or no-interest loans may also be available through EFC's Clean Water State Revolving Fund.



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The formation of a sewer district is a critical step to achieving the TMDL goal and reversing the impairments to the lake, improving water quality for residents and visitors. DEC fully supports the initiative to form a sewer district and proceed with the design and construction of a sewer system and centralized wastewater treatment facility.

Sincerely,

*Melanie Stein*

Melanie Stein, P.E.  
Professional Environmental Engineer 1  
NYSDEC Division of Water, Region 9