

## **Assembly Candidate Proposes State Takeover of DEP**

Mathew Tully, a Republican, who is seeking the 127th state Assembly district seat being vacated by Daniel Hooker, announced, last week, that his goal is to have New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) property and responsibility transferred to a new state authority, which he has dubbed The New York State Water Authority.

Tully formally announced his candidacy for the Assembly seat on Monday.

Tully said he envisions the authority would be a 17-member board, similar to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and would include members appointed by the governor and the mayor of New York City, and residents from upstate counties. Included would be six non-voting seats, which would be held by representatives of organized labor, the Watershed Agricultural Council, the Catskill Watershed Corporation, the Watershed Protection and Partnership Council, the Coalition of Watershed Towns and an environmental or sportsmen's group.

Tully explained the reasoning for his plan. "I have lived in the watershed for many years and it is simply un-American to me to be forced to listen to a foreign municipality dictate how I can use my property," he said. "It is un-American to me to have police officers under the control of a foreign municipality telling me what to do. The American way is for the citizens to have a vote in the government that controls them, or at least a say in how they will be governed and policed.

"I know others have written letters, held protests and litigated in court to try to get the DEP to be a better neighbor. All these efforts have failed. It is naive to think that people who can't vote for the mayor of New York will have any influence over New York City politicians. The New York State Water Authority is the only way for the citizens of the watershed to be heard and protected."

Tully recommends that the water board should acquire all DEP water supply property and responsibility, and that the New York State Senate should be charged with the responsibility to confirm all board members. He also says water delivery to New York's nine million customers could be streamlined and less expensive if the New York City Municipal Water Finance Authority (NYCMWFA) and the New York City Water Board (NYCWB) were also brought under the umbrella of the NYS Water Authority. "The tax savings by this consolidation of services could be used to help fund New York City's failing school system," he added.

Tully is an attorney in the Albany and Catskill law firm of Tully, Rinckey and Associates, and a Hunter resident.

The 127th Assembly District contains the Delaware County towns of Sidney, Franklin, Davenport and Harpersfield. The district's incumbent assemblyman, Republican Daniel Hooker, announced, in January, that he would not seek re-election this coming November.

