

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

John O'Connell, III | NYRWA President

As I'm writing this article on July 20th for the fall *Aquafacts*, the State of NY is in a drought situation. As a farmer, I have seen wet and dry conditions many times; however, this is the first time that I have seen ponds, lakes and reservoirs at such low levels. This will affect many things in the upcoming months and maybe into the winter, time will tell. This is my first article as President so please have patience as I give you a little history as to who I am.

I started in the wastewater and water business in 1988, as Superintendent of Public Works and I worked there completing both my water training and wastewater training in 1989. I achieved a IIB water and a 3A wastewater license, both at the same time. I then was asked in 1998 if I would consider serving on the NY Rural Water Board, I accepted. Within two months, I was also asked if I would fill the role as National Director for NYRWA on the National Board and again, I accepted. I have since then served on both Boards and now hold the title of NYRWA President and serve as the Director at Large on the Executive Committee for the National Rural Water Board. I left my position as Superintendent of Public Works in 2001, and started employment at Koester Associates

as the Retrofit, Parts and Service Manager until 2012, when I decided to return to public employment and joined the City of Cortland Wastewater Treatment Plant as Deputy Chief Operator to complete my NYS retirement requirements. In addition, I also operate the Town of Throop's Water Department part time and operate a small activated WWTP, and work on our seven hundred acre farm with my brother.

So this is what I have done with most of my life. Since May of 2016, I retired from the City of Cortland Wastewater Treatment Plant, but still run the farm and still operate both Throop's water system and the small activated WWTP. In addition, I was asked to join Shumaker Engineer group part time as an inspector, I accepted this position so that I wouldn't become bored... I have enjoyed my years in the water and wastewater industry and certainly have met a lot of great folks. As National Director, I have been able to travel to just about every state in the Nation and have made friends all over the country. In closing, I am very pleased to serve you, our members, and pleased the Board has faith in me to keep NYRWA strong and look to the future for more great work by the NYRWA Staff and Board. 💧💧
