Supervisor Romaine and Town Council Join NYS Department of State Calling for Revisions to US Army Corps Plan to Dump Dredge Spoils in LI Sound

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Farmingville, NY – Farmingville, NY – On January 22, Supervisor Ed Romaine and the Brookhaven Town Council sent a letter to New York State Secretary of State, Cesar A. Perales, in support of his position to require revisions to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ (USACE) Long Island Sound Dredged Materials Management Plan (DMMP). The plan calls for dumping tens of millions of cubic yards of sediment into the Long Island Sound, which the letter says will cause increased pollution and create adverse impacts in the waterway that runs the Town’s north shore. The dredge spoils in question would originate from rivers and harbors along the Connecticut coastline. The letter contends that great strides have been made towards improving the water quality of the Long Island Sound and that this new plan could “undo” the progress that has been made.

The Supervisor and Town Council wrote that they understand “the need for dredging to maintain the economic viability of waterways along the Connecticut coastline,” but that the plan “falls far short” of meeting the goals established in 2005. In February of 2005 in a joint letter to the USACE, the Governors of New York and Connecticut requested the creation of the DMMP. The need for a DMMP also was identified by the US Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) June 2005 Rule that designated two of the Sound’s historic open-water placement sites for continued use, the Central Long Island Sound site and the Western Long Island Sound site. The EPA’s rule required preparation of a DMMP to examine alternative placement practices, with the goal of reducing or eliminating open-water placement of dredged material in the waters of Long Island Sound wherever practicable.

In August of 2015, Supervisor Romaine and Councilwoman Jane Bonner were joined by Senator Ken LaValle, Assemblyman Steve Englebright and others to warn about the potentially contaminated spoils that could be a threat to the sensitive ecology of the Sound. At the time, the Supervisor addressed the USACE’s failure to notify government officials of a scheduled public hearing to review its DMMP and Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the Long Island Sound. He criticized the federal agencies for releasing a long and detailed report to the public only seven days before the hearing, leaving little time for review.

The USACE is responsible for maintaining 52 Federal Navigation Projects (FNPs) in the Long Island Sound and adjacent waters that include general navigation features requiring periodic maintenance dredging. These include 31 projects in Connecticut, 17 in New York and four in Rhode Island.

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