



Congressman Tim Bishop

FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK

NEWS RELEASE

OCTOBER 31, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LI DELEGATION INTRODUCES BILL TO BAN DUMPING CONTAMINATED DREDGE WASTE INTO SOUND

20 Million Cubic Yards of Dredge Waste Scheduled to be Dumped into LI Sound

Washington, DC: Congressman Tim Bishop today introduced bipartisan legislation to ban dumping of contaminated dredge waste into Long Island Sound. The entire Long Island Congressional delegation co-sponsored Bishop's bill, the "Long Island Sound Preservation and Protection Act." Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton will offer companion legislation in the Senate.

Bishop's legislation would protect Long Island Sound from massive dumping of contaminated dredge waste. The Environmental Protection Agency is currently considering a plan that would dump more than 20 million cubic yards of dredge spoil into the Sound over the next 20 years. This waste would primarily come from large dredging projects in industrial Connecticut Harbors.

"Long Island's past and future are bound together by the water that surrounds us and the land that sustains us," Bishop said. "We cannot afford pollution. That is why the Long Island delegation has joined together to protect the Long Island Sound. After taking so many steps forward to protect the Long Island Sound, dumping tons of contaminated dredge waste is a giant leap back."

"The Long Island Sound shouldn't be a dump for highly contaminated dredge materials," Senator Clinton said. "We need to keep building on our efforts to clean up and restore the Sound."

The EPA's own data shows that at historical dumping sites there is far greater accumulation of harmful contaminants like mercury, copper, chromium, and lead, than are found on average in the Sound.

"The notion that it's okay to dump dredged sediments laced with toxic contaminants into Long Island's estuarine waters is extremely misguided," Kevin McAllister, Peconic Baykeeper said. "Without question, this action will degrade water quality and threaten marine life. This legislation is another example of Congressman Bishop's environmental leadership. The Long Island Sound Preservation and Protection Act will aid in all our efforts to protect Long Island's waters for future generations."

"Long Island Sound is one of our nation's national treasures," Congressman Gary Ackerman said. "Its critical environmental, recreational and commercial benefits cannot be understated. We must do all we can to prevent further deterioration of the Sound's water quality and retain its natural beauty."

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“In order to restore and maintain the environmental health of the Long Island Sound, it is imperative that we prohibit dumping of contaminated dredged materials,” Congressman Peter King said. “This legislation will do just that.”

“This legislation will balance the need to make Long Island’s smaller and cleaner harbors navigable and will dramatically reduce the amount of industrial filth that could be placed into the Sound through large scale dredging project,” Congressman Steve Israel, Co-Chairman of the Long Island Sound Caucus said.

“We need to be vigilant to protect this wonderful body of water upon which many rely for their livelihood, transportation and recreation,” Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy said. “Nothing and no one should be allowed to interfere with our efforts in the last decade to clean up Long Island Sound.”

The Long Island Sound is one of the nation’s most important and burdened waterways. Over 10 percent of our nation’s population live within 40 miles of the Long Island Sound. Currently, more than 1 billion gallons of inadequately treated waste makes its way into the Long Island Sound each day—so there is already a great burden on the Sound.

“Citizens Campaign for the Environment applauds Congressman Bishop’s leadership in introducing legislation which will protect Long Island Sound from the harmful effects of dumping dredge spoils containing hazardous materials which are detrimental to human health and the environment,” Sarah Meyland, Executive Director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment said. “The practice of open Sound dumping has been shown to be a poor solution to the disposal of the highly contaminated materials and we believe that a better solution is needed now.”

Bishop noted that the legislation does not stop small marina owners from dredging their harbors and dumping the sediments in Long Island Sound. As such, it will have no negative impact on commercial fisherman, ferry operators or pleasure craft operating in the Sound. The bill would also prevent dumping of contaminated dredge waste into Block Island Sound and Peconic Bay.

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