



TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON

159 Pantigo Road
East Hampton, New York 11937

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 16, 2015

TOWN BOARD WILL MONITOR, BUT NOT HALT, DOWNTOWN MONTAUK PROJECT

The East Hampton Town Board is continuing to monitor the Downtown Montauk Stabilization Project and has listened carefully to the numerous, passionate concerns raised in response to the commencement of construction activity. In balancing all of the information, the Town Board sees no basis upon which to halt this project and fully supports completion of this interim protective measure until the completion of the Fire Island to Montauk Point Reformulation Study (FIMP).

Supervisor Larry Cantwell stated, "It can't be emphasized enough that the current project is an interim protective measure until FIMP can finally be completed and the long-term stabilization solutions can be implemented. We will do everything in our power to cooperate with our federal, state, and county partners and strongly advocate that the preferred sand-only stabilization project be authorized, funded, and implemented as soon as possible."

"The Town Board is charged with the responsibility of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the people of the Town of East Hampton. The Town Board cannot ignore the specific findings made in the Corps' environmental review, nor can it ignore the Federal Court's rationale in protecting the public's interest by undertaking this project," stated Councilman Peter Van Scoyoc.

Supervisor Cantwell added, "The Federal Court has recognized the real risks that a future significant storm poses to downtown Montauk. In its decision, the Court set forth:

"There can be no question but that Long Islanders, including all those who live, work or visit the area sought to be protected by the project, have suffered catastrophic property and personal loss as a result of past hurricanes and other storms. New York's latest tragic flooding took place almost three years to the date of this opinion in the form of Hurricane Sandy. It was that event that finally led the Federal government to fully fund disaster relief aimed at protecting coastal communities and citizens from future storms. ...It is clear that any order delaying the project, for even a short period of time, will put the shoreline in danger, and expose Montauk's population to unnecessary risk."

"The calls to cancel this project are well meaning, but simply not in the interest of public safety. We recognize a "sand-only" project is the preferred option, but it was rejected by the Army Corps

for this interim project and won't be an option until FIMP is implemented. We will closely observe and track the construction activity of the contractors to ensure compliance with the significant environmental safeguards built into the project's design that were developed over the past three years of design and environmental review to ensure the protection of both our coastline and downtown areas," added Councilman Fred Overton.

State Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele Jr. said, "As I repeatedly stated during all of the public hearings on this proposal, this emergency project was far from perfect. In fact, I stated it was only marginally better than a sharp stick in the eye. However, after Hurricane Sandy, for those who are entrusted with the public safety, doing nothing was not an option. Leaving downtown Montauk vulnerable for years would have been irresponsible. This interim measure was necessary to provide some protection to downtown Montauk. The Fire Island to Montauk point (FIMP) project was still several years away. I believe the Town made the right decision in allowing the Army Corps of Engineers to proceed with the emergency project. Moving forward, we need to focus on working with all partners to ensure that under FIMP, an appropriate long-term coastal erosion management plan and soft, large-scale beach re-nourishment project are fully realized."

Suffolk County Legislator Jay Schneiderman said, "The current reinforced dune project should not be looked at as an end product, but rather as a means to an end. In a few years, a wide sandy beach will be constructed in front of the dune. Under this federally funded project, sand will be dredged from off shore and pumped onto the beach. The current project is necessary in the interim period to protect all of downtown Montauk if a major storm strikes. After the beach has been constructed, the current project will not be necessary and can be removed."