



Congressman Tim Bishop

FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK

NEWS RELEASE

FEBRUARY 27, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BISHOP PRAISES DREDGING PROGRESS

Congressman: Much Work Still Remains to Protect Shoreline

Hampton Bays, NY-- Congressman Tim Bishop, Assemblyman Fred Thiele and officials from the Army Corps of Engineers gave a briefing on Friday about the progress of dredging projects on the South Shore. The press conference was held at an active dredge site at Shinnecock Inlet, where the state's second largest commercial fishing fleet is based and which depends on the inlet for access to the ocean, as does the multi-million dollar recreational boating industry. In addition to working for funding for the project, Bishop was also instrumental in clearing a bureaucratic error that almost sidetracked the entire project.

"The dredging work we have done this year have improved safety on the South Shore and helped protect our local economy," Bishop said. "However, I am extremely concerned that unless we act now to restore funding cuts to the Army Corps that we will be facing a crisis in future years."

The equipment being used at Shinnecock Inlet was previously used to dredge Moriches Inlet, and it is expected to go to Fire Island after this project is complete. Shinnecock Inlet was last dredged in 2000 and Moriches Inlet had not been dredged since 1998. The sand build-up at Moriches had reached crisis levels, leading to an accident over the summer in which several boaters were killed when their boat ran aground.

In addition to discussing dredging progress, Bishop and the officials also discussed the impact of cuts to the Army Corps of Engineers. The President's budget for next year cuts funding for the Army Corps by more than \$350 million. Shore Protection projects are hit particularly hard, with a cut of nearly 50 percent below the level of funding for this year. Among the most disturbing cuts is the elimination of funding for the Fire Island to Montauk Point Study.

The Fire Island to Montauk Point Study is a comprehensive initiative that would provide for storm protection and beach erosion control along a stretch of the south shore of Long Island covering nearly 83 miles. The study has already cost upwards of \$20 million. The cost of continuing the project for another year is estimated at \$1.7 million. Bishop has been working with other leaders in Washington to restore funding for this vital study.

"We're going to fight hard to restore the funding, because this project is so important to the safety of our shoreline and the health of Long Island's economy," Bishop said.

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