



Congressman Tim Bishop

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BISHOP: WATER BILL'S PASSAGE PROTECT LI SHORES

Bill Contains Funds to Protect Montauk Lighthouse, Smith Point Memorial, Invest in Shoreline Protection

Washington, DC—Congressman Tim Bishop, a member of the House Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, applauded the passage of the final House-Senate conference report on H.R. 1495, the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (WRDA). The bill passed the House last night by a vote of 381-40. It contains funding for protecting coastal communities from natural disasters as well as securing important icons, such as the Montauk Point Lighthouse and the Flight 800 Memorial at Smith Point Park.

Every two years, Congress must reauthorize WRDA, which governs the operations of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). However, the Senate has failed to enact it for the past seven years. The Corps is responsible for protecting all of America's shorelines and navigable waterways, in addition to implementing ecosystem restoration projects, flood control efforts, and disaster relief.

"The time to prepare for the next major storm or hurricane is now, and this bill makes a real investment in protecting coastal communities," said Bishop, a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which oversees the Corps' activities. "I am pleased that this bill takes major steps towards protecting some of eastern Long Island's most treasured icons."

The Flight 800 Memorial at Smith Point Park has been exposed to severe beach erosion since it was dedicated last year. The bill would make the park a priority location for beach rebuilding and sand deposition when the Corps dredges Moriches Inlet. In the long-term, the Corps' Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point study will propose solutions to storm damage threats in this area. Earlier this year, Bishop and Senator Charles Schumer helped clear red tape to allow a beach renourishment project to go forward at Smith Point Park, which may have saved the beach from major damage for a nor'easter that hit shortly afterwards.

In addition, the bill authorizes a \$14.6 million project to protect Montauk Point, home to another shoreline icon, the Montauk Point Lighthouse; the federal cost share of the project is \$7.3 million. When the lighthouse was built in 1796, it stood 300 feet from the edge of the bluff. Today, erosion has reduced that down to 75 feet. Bishop inserted language into the water resources bill directing the Secretary of the Army to expedite the completion of the Corps of Engineers report on the Montauk Point project, speeding up action and demonstrating Congressional support for East End shore protection.

The bill also extends authorization of the Atlantic Coast Monitoring Project (\$7.5 million per fiscal year), which will closely define and monitor the coastal processes that affect 130 miles of the Atlantic Coast stretching from Coney Island to Montauk Point. Although the project had expired, Bishop helped renew the monitoring program, which will help create an environmental blueprint for government's response to storms and heavy erosion. This bill clarifies the scope of the project, requires annual reports, and authorizes appropriations of \$800,000 for the construction of an Atlantic Coast tsunami warning system.

Finally, the bill authorizes \$15 million to provide technical, planning, and design assistance for carrying out watershed management, restoration, and development projects in nineteen watersheds, including the Long Island Sound Watershed. This will allow the Corps to coordinate with state and local governments to implement for the first time a comprehensive planning and design initiative for the Long Island Sound Watershed. The plan will restore water quality, control and remediate toxic sediments and restore degraded wetlands and waterways.

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