

# The Suffolk Times.

## Suffolk to Gov. Cuomo: Don't dump dredge spoils in LI Sound

by [Jen Nuzzo](#) |

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Suffolk County lawmakers and local environmentalists are urging Gov. Andrew Cuomo to reject the U.S. Army of Corps of Engineers' latest plan for disposing of dredged materials in Long Island Sound.

The Corps approved its Dredged Material Management Plan Jan. 11. The next step is to present the final draft to Mr. Cuomo for approval.

The controversial plan is the Corps' response to a 2005 mandate from New York and Connecticut aimed at phasing out the practice of dumping dredged materials into Long Island Sound. Local dredge dumping sites include Cornfield Shoals, just north of Greenport, and another near New London, west of Fishers Island.

The plan calls for about 53 million cubic yards of dredge spoils — which opponents say could contain toxic materials such as mercury, lead, PCBs and pesticides — to be dumped into the Sound over the next 30 years.

County Legislator Al Krupski (D-Cutchogue) attended a press conference Feb. 23 in Hauppauge with several legislators and environmentalists to voice his opposition to the proposal, describing the latest version of the plan as “clearly a case of putting the needs of a few above the health of the Sound.”

“It's unfortunate the Army Corps' plan allows for the continued disposal of potentially harmful materials into the Long Island Sound, despite the strong objections across the board from New York's elected officials, residents and environmental advocacy groups,” he said.

Mr. Krupski also attended a public hearing held by the Corps in September in Riverhead to state his concern that dredged materials could harm water quality in the Sound and submitted a letter signed by all 18 members of the Suffolk County Legislature opposing the plan, which he described as a “lazy and cheap way out.”

Adrienne Esposito, executive director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment, said she believes the Corps has to stop using the Sound “as a dumpster” and find alternative ways to dispose of dredged materials.

“We have come very far in our efforts to protect the Sound and cannot allow this ill-conceived plan to go forward,” she said. “The Army Corps is apparently looking for cheap and easy disposal options without any consideration for the economic and environmental value of the Sound.”

Southold Town Supervisor Scott Russell confirmed Tuesday that a specific concern about the plan has not been addressed, although the Corps said it would be. That concern involves the suggestion that 450 acres of agricultural land in Mattituck might be a feasible location for de-watering 2 million cubic yards of dredge spoil. In September, the Corps told a Southold Town representative that this idea would be removed from the plan.

“We were all well-represented at the hearings and ignored,” Mr. Russell said. “We cannot force changes to the findings. What we can do is raise objections and consider all options on a project-by-project basis.”

Riverhead Town Supervisor Sean Walter said no one from the Corps reached out to his office about the proposal and he believes more discussion is needed before the plan is adopted since a lot of money and resources have gone into improving water quality in the Sound.

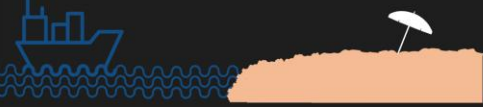
“If they were really serious about getting public input they wouldn’t just hold public hearings — they would sit down one-on-one with the elected officials of the towns, the county executive and state officials,” he said. “If they were really serious, they would try to meet with as many people as they can. Short of that, I think they don’t necessarily care what elected officials have to say.”

Corps program manager Steven Wolf said at the September public hearing that dredged materials must be signed off on by the Environmental Protection Agency and the state before they’re disposed of in open waters. If the material is deemed toxic, he said, a different disposal method is used.

Corps staffers who worked on the latest draft proposal also said the plan includes a scoring system to determine

# Dump the Plan?

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Confused about the debate over a dumping plan for Long Island Sound? We'll break it down for you.

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**Dredging** is a technique used to clear waterways for navigation by boats or barges.

When too much sand and silt settles to the bottom of riverbeds and bays, it can become **dangerous** for ships.

*Good* ✓




*Bad* ✗



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Dredging works by scraping up the sediment and silt. That material can then be disposed of in one of two ways:

*More expensive*




**Reuse it!**

Use the silt and sand to:

- replenish eroded beaches
- repair and strengthen sand dunes
- backfill bulkheads
- fill in old mineshafts

*Less expensive*



**Dump it!**

Pour the sand, silt and sediment into Long Island Sound to dispose of it.

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A recent **Dredge Material Management Plan** presented by the Army Corps of Engineers suggests dumping another 30 to 50 million cubic yards of sediment into the Sound.

Environmental advocates are concerned the sediment may contain high nitrogen levels or toxic chemicals that could harm the waterways.

The Corps says it will test all sediments for toxins before dumping.

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SOURCES: CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

alternative disposal methods and locations for dredged materials, such as constructing marshlands.

The Corps is responsible for dredging areas to improve water navigation, including 31 projects in Connecticut and 17 in New York.

*Top photo: The Long Island Sound in Greenport, not far from the Cornfield Shoals dredge dumping site.  
(Credit: Grant Parpan, file)*