

**Request:** I am the State appointed Harbor Master for Guilford and I urge you to not support the approval of Senate Bill 78, as currently worded, due to its potentially drastic impact on the residents of the Town of Guilford. Specifically, line 23 of the bill states "...disfavors the open water placement of dredged material". There is no local land site available for Guilford to dispose of dredge material, nor is there any practical access to an upland disposal site. Given the lack of both a shoreline or upland disposal site, the language of this bill has the potential to require future dredge material to be disposed of in the Atlantic Ocean. This could nearly double the cost of dredging, which in turn has the potential, in the long term, to eventually shut down all of Guilford's marinas. This bill as currently worded jeopardizes future access to Long Island Sound.

**Background:** Currently, the Guilford Town Marina and the federal channel require dredging every 7-8 years to facilitate safe passage for private and commercial vessels. One private marina does maintenance dredging every year to maintain a navigable channel. Dredging costs for the Town Marina basin typically costs between \$200,000 and \$300,000 per dredge. These costs are fully funded by Guilford boat owners. Typically, since the 1990s, the Guilford boat owners have also funded dredging of the Federal Channel due to a lack of Federal funding. Last year, USACE Storm Sandy funds were made available to facilitate dredging the channel. The cost for the most recent dredge of the Marina and the Federal channel was \$3,397,210. It is estimated that the cost of dredging will at least double if dredge material cannot be disposed of in Long Island Sound, as has been the past practice. Guilford boaters and commercial operators would most likely not be capable of absorbing the increased costs for dredging, thus there is a very real potential for the basin and channel to eventually fill in to the point that it becomes impossible to safely navigate and ultimately the closure of the Town Marina. Additionally, several private marinas along the Guilford shoreline as well boaters who use the State's launch ramp on the East River may also eventually lose their access to Long Island Sound.

The current statute reads "...provide for environmentally sound dredging and disposal of dredged materials." Prior to each dredge, samples of the dredge material are taken and a laboratory analysis is completed by a USACE approved laboratory. This testing costs several thousands of dollars and is borne by the boat owners. Any dredge material that is contaminated must be 'capped', i.e. covered, with clean non-contaminated material if it disposed in Long Island Sound. Typically, dredge material from Guilford has been 'clean' and not required 'capping.'

**Recommendation:** Maintain the current verbiage "...provide for environmentally sound dredging and disposal of dredged materials."

*Fred Brisbois*

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