



ENVIRONMENTAL
ADVOCATES OF NEW YORK

SUPPORTS



Key to Legislative Ratings: Major Benefit Substantial Benefit Beneficial

OCEAN SLUDGE DUMPING

A.3320 (Colton, et al.)

S.5583 (Lanza)

Summary

The legislation would amend the environmental conservation law to prohibit the disposal of dredged spoils containing toxic pollutants into the waters of the marine district.

Explanation

Considerable progress has been made in stopping the dumping of toxic-contaminated sludge and soils into New York's ocean waters in recent years. But much of that progress would be undone if the Army Corps of Engineers is allowed to execute a plan to dump highly contaminated dredge spoils in the borrow pits off the coast of Staten Island. These pits were dug years ago to, among other purposes, provide sand for New York City beaches. Filling these pits with contaminated sludge and covering them with an underwater cap might be cost-effective in the short run, but simply moves underwater poisons from one part of the ecosystem to another.

The material to be dumped contains elevated levels of highly toxic and carcinogenic chemicals and heavy metals, including: dioxin, PCBs, petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals including mercury, and arsenic. The Corps has estimated that 150 million cubic yards of contaminated dredge spoils will be disposed of in the borrow pits over a 10-year period. From 3% to 5% of that amount will be dispersed into New York's waters just by the process of dumping. Wave action, storms and tides will, over time, disperse more. This source of ongoing pollution will compromise and discourage good efforts, like the cleanup of toxic PCBs from the Hudson River, that are underway to reestablish the region's fishery for striped bass and other species.

Environmental Advocates of New York supports this bill.

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