The Only Option

With the Village of Quogue’s proposed beach nourishment project garnering significant attention throughout the community, I’ll take this opportunity to address the project, sand replenishment in general and the gaping void in regional coastal zone planning and policy.

Village officials are seeking state and federal permits to pump more than one million cubic yards of dredged sand over 2.7 miles of ocean shorefront at a cost of $15 million [“Beach Nourishment Hearing Is Scheduled,” July 23]. While the project cost is known, the metrics by which the village will proportion tax-base financing remains uncertain or undisclosed.

As has been demonstrated time and time again, beach nourishment is a folly. Under favorable conditions a dredged beach will only last several years. Take into consideration back-to-back nor’easters, and one million yards of sand can disappear in a winter season. It’s happened before and the reality is, it will happen again.

While dredging sand for beach building currently has its place as a management tool, our communities should no longer be asked to support projects without comprehensive coastal zone management policies in place. Moreover, policies are needed which are unequivocal about prohibiting coastal armoring and where retreat (moving back) is the principal approach.

With sea levels projected to rise by 6 feet—yes, 6 feet—before the turn of the century, pumping sand every few years at an astronomical cost is unsustainable, not to mention irresponsible governance. Politically courageous decisions which move us toward a sustainable future must occur without further delay.

Start moving the structures back, or in the case of Dune Road, start moving them out.

Kevin McAllister

Founder Defend H2O