

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR KARA HAHN



FIFTH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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**SUFFOLK LEGISLATURE APPROVES FUNDS TO MONITOR
WATER QUALITY & TIDAL WETLAND LOSS**

*Legislator Hahn and County Executive Bellone Advocate Salt Marsh Research at Flax Pond
To Protect & Restore Fragile Ecosystem and Aide in Coastal Flood Mitigation*

(Hauppauge, New York) – On February 5, 2013, the Suffolk County Legislature approved funding to monitor tidal water elevation and water quality to assess tidal wetland loss in Flax Pond, a 146-acres salt marsh located in the Village of Old Field on Long Island’s North Shore, and other embayments along the Long Island Sound shoreline.

The \$185,715 appropriated from the Water Quality Protection and Restoration Program funded by the quarter percent sales tax, will allow the County Department of Economic Development and Planning to enter into an agreement with the United States Geological Survey (USGS), New York Water Science Center to conduct the project. The project will re-establish and continue operating a real-time monitoring station to document tidal variability of hydrology and water quality enabling an investigation of the causes of tidal wetland loss in Suffolk County embayments of Long Island Sound. (Embayments are indentations in the shoreline that are larger than coves, but smaller than a gulf.)

“Salt marshes are among the most productive environments in the world, providing nourishment for a large variety of fish, plants, shellfish, and even insects, which in turn provides for a great variety of birds and mammals. This project will provide information

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critical to protect and restore tidal wetlands and shellfish, finfish, and crustacean habitats in this fragile but magnificent environmental sanctuary,” said Legislator Kara Hahn. “Data mined by the monitoring system is critical to promote the health of the marshland, which also helps protect against storm damage and acts as a filter to absorb some kinds of pollutants.”

“Through the ebb and flow of tides, salt marshes serve as a barometer of rising sea levels,” said County Executive Steve Bellone. “Given the kind of damage our shoreline sustained as a result of Sandy, it’s equally important that this project will enable the USGS to collect data on rising sea levels and will provide the foundation for a climate change sentinel monitoring program.”

In addition to monitoring tidal variability, the program will support the coastal flood hazard mitigation efforts of the National Weather Service, local emergency management officials, and other stakeholders who can benefit from the data generated.

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