



**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
New York District**

To the Editor:

In response to the September 19 editorial in Dan's Papers, "Hermine Proves Army Corps Naysayers Right in Montauk," the Army Corps of Engineers would like to correct various inaccuracies.

First, some context. While Hermine did not make landfall, it did stall off Long Island for several days, subjecting the shoreline to high surf and damaging waves for multiple high-tide cycles. This is much different than a storm that moves through quickly. Historically, many slow-moving, moderate storms have actually caused more erosion than more powerful storm events. Saying Hermine was 'not a big deal' and 'a little storm' is inaccurate in this instance. Every storm is different and myriad variables influence shoreline impact(s).

I am sure, as a responsible member of the media that you would want your readers to know accurate facts:

1) Hermine damaged approximately 200 (not 300) feet of a 3,200-foot-long project, a small fraction (just above 6%), certainly not 'a considerable part' of the project as stated in your editorial. The project also performed as designed: There were no reports of flooding or damage behind the dune and the sand acted as a sacrificial buffer with the geotextile bags preventing further erosion which would have certainly occurred without their presence.

2) Contrary to the article, the Corps is developing a plan to restore the damaged section of dune and cover the geotextile bags with sand with 100% federal funds because the project is not yet turned over to the local sponsor. Your assertion, 'I am told the Army Corps wants to dispute this repairing of the dune' is simply not true.

3) The Town of East Hampton is the local sponsor for the project and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) is the non-federal sponsor. As the local sponsor, the Town of East Hampton will assume responsibility for operation and maintenance of the project after completion. Any suggestion that the Town Board was not aware of these responsibilities inferred in the editorial 'The Town Board for accepting this project was wrong' is incorrect. Sand replacement for the overall project is a routine operations and maintenance requirement for the local sponsor which was part of the partnership agreement prior to the start of construction.

More broadly, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District, has a strong record of success reducing flood risks from severe storms: During Sandy, areas with Corps projects in place fared better than those without such projects—experiencing far less flooding and saving millions in potential damage to homes and infrastructure, as was the case in places like Coney Island. Further, the tone of the article clearly discrediting and mocking the credibility of the Corps of Engineers is misguided and unfair at best. The Army Corps works diligently to reduce flood risks to communities across the U.S. and around the world, in addition to many other civil works projects benefiting the public.



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Your publication is certainly entitled to its opinion; we respect that. However, my expert team and I strongly dispute your conclusions about this project—conclusions that have no basis in fact from a scientific, engineering and policy standpoint. In summation, a knee-jerk reaction to the relatively minor impact to the project in Montauk, which is being used to broadly denounce the entire body of work of a federal agency is at best misguided and off base.

Long before a Corps project commences, a team of professionals complete detailed studies, evaluations, cost-benefit analysis to ensure taxpayer money is being spent for maximum benefit and community outreach—to explain to stakeholders both political & constituent what will be done and why. ALL of these steps took place in Downtown Montauk and any assertion to the contrary is simply not true, I suspect you have higher standards for your publication which I urge you to pursue.

COL David A. Caldwell

District Engineer and Commander

New York District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers