

Letter: Regional approach to beach problems the answer

To the editor:

I appreciate The Daily News' ongoing series and recent editorial. I fully agree with your assessment that Plum Island is in crisis that could have disastrous consequences.

A recent letter sent to the communities is misunderstood. At a recent administrative hearing, property owners withdrew their motion to intervene, clearing the way for the needed dredging permit. This is good news for a future regional effort; the dredging of the river can go forward.

A simple challenge to the three communities: enter into a tri-community agreement spelling out the details of the next dredging and the goals of regional sand-sharing plan. This can be started with a simple letter of understanding between Salisbury, Newburyport and Newbury followed by a formal tri-community agreement that is binding upon the parties. The devil is in the details.

The real work ahead is at the state level. Our state agencies have become addicted to the administrative process to sort out challenges and appeals. Created to facilitate problem-solving in a less formal, time-consuming and less expensive way than a judicial appeal, in reality is anything but that. The process is in need of a complete overhaul.

State Sen. Bruce Tarr is owed a debt of gratitude for his efforts to organize local meetings with community, state and federal officials concerned with coastal erosion, regional dredging and beach nourishment. Rep. Harriett Stanley and Rep. Mike Costello have worked tirelessly to bring officials and members of the public together to find a common ground and solution to our coastal problems.

Congressman Tierney, along with Sens. Kennedy and Kerry, has answered the call for help from our communities. All have met with local officials in Washington; four funding requests totaling \$10,000,000 have been warmly received, processed and supported by our delegation.

We cannot afford to take a piecemeal approach and repeat the mistakes of the past. The time is right to investigate new sediment sources for coastal areas suffering from the loss of/or interruption of the natural distribution of sand for beach renourishment, to work with our neighbors for a global approach to coastal management and reclaim sand for direct beach nourishment.

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