



The Coalition for
Hither Woods^{INC.}

January 9, 2023

Supervisor Peter Van Scoyoc & Members of
the East Hampton Town Board
159 Pantigo Road
East Hampton, New York 11937

Re: Proposed Sewage Treatment Plant in Hither Woods

Dear Supervisor Van Scoyoc & Members of the Town Board:

At your December 13, 2022, public meeting, the Department of Natural Resources made a Power Point presentation concerning the Town's proposed wastewater treatment plan for Montauk. As you know, a crucial element in this plan is the construction of a sewage treatment plant on County parkland in Hither Woods, which you plan to acquire via a land swap. In the Natural Resources Department's presentation, Slide 16 listed the Town's "Requirements for Land Swap," with the first stated requirement being: "Broad Public Support."

It should be apparent to you all by now that there will never be broad public support for putting a sewage treatment plant on parkland in Hither Woods. In fact, just the opposite has happened. A tremendous groundswell of opposition has built, and is still building, to the very idea of clearing 14 acres of parkland and building a sewage treatment plant ("STP") in Hither Woods. Among the groups that have joined The Coalition for Hither Woods in opposition to a Hither Woods STP are the Group for the East End, the Long Island Pine Barrens Society, the Long Island Botanical Society, the Long Island Greenbelt Trail Conference, the East Hampton Trails Preservation Society, the Southampton Trails Preservation Society, the East Hampton Sportsmen's Alliance, Concerned Long Island Mountain Bicyclists (CLIMB), Third House Nature Center, Seatuck Environmental Association, and the Open Space Council.

The handwriting is on the wall. The Town Board could hardly have proposed anything less popular than to put a sewer plant in Hither Woods. Thus, the time has arrived for you to publicly renounce this aspect of the Montauk wastewater treatment plan. If you do not, rest assured that The Coalition for Hither Woods and

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its allies will fight such a proposal, at all levels of government and with all our strength.

There are other methods available to the Town for treating wastewater in Montauk that do not involve a centralized sewage treatment plant on Hither Woods parkland. You should direct your energies to exploring and implementing those alternatives.

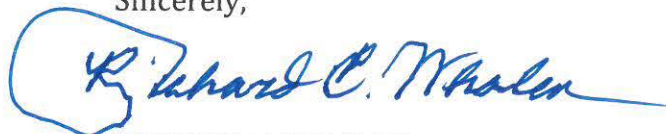
At the very least, if the Town Board does not abandon the proposed Hither Woods STP, you must declare yourselves lead agency for the sewer district proposal and issue a Positive Declaration under SEQRA. In the Power Point presentation to which I referred above, the Town listed its expected "Phases" for implementing the wastewater treatment program, including the sewer plant. The "Land Swap with Suffolk County" is forecast to occur in 2022-2023 and the "Map & Plan Report" is projected to be finished in "2021-2023." Yet completion of the SEQRA process is anticipated in "Late 2023."

This is unacceptable. No aspect of the sewer district project, least of all a land exchange with Suffolk County, should take place before completion of the SEQRA process. Furthermore, given the proposed bulldozing of 14 acres of forest in the midst of the largest block of preserved open space on the South Fork, and the many other potential adverse environmental impacts associated with this project, it is unthinkable that the Town Board would do anything less than prepare a full-blown Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS").

To date, the Town has not, to our knowledge, even begun the SEQRA process. It is totally unrealistic for you to project that an EIS on a project of this magnitude will be scoped, prepared, heard, and adopted before the end of 2023.

We believe you have clear choices to make. First, follow your own precept in regard to the proposed Hither Woods STP. The idea of developing a sewage treatment plan in Hither Woods is highly unpopular on Montauk and in Suffolk County generally. You should abandon this proposal without further delay. Second, if you choose to press forward with your ill-conceived idea of building an STP in Hither Woods, the entire Montauk Sewer District proposal must be the subject of a robust and fully transparent Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,



RICHARD E. WHALEN
President

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Copies to:

East Hampton Town Clerk
State Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele, Jr.
State Senator Anthony H. Palumbo
Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone
Suffolk County Legislator Bridget Fleming
Suffolk County Legislator Al Krupski
Suffolk County Planning Director Sarah Lansdale
Suffolk County Parks Commissioner Justin Smagin
Suffolk County Parks Trustees