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## \$7 Million Earmarked For Lighthouse

By Janis Hewitt

(08/02/2007) With the approval on Friday by the House-Senate conference committee of \$35 million through the Water Resource Development Act for Long Island projects, the Montauk Point Lighthouse came another step closer to a rock revetment project that will prevent it from tumbling off the bluff and into the sea.

The money will be funneled through the federal water project fund bill and is still subject to approval from both the House and Senate and President Bush, which is expected. Of the total, \$7 million has been earmarked for the local landmark to build a 12.6-ton quarry stone armor, 840 feet in length with a crest of 40 feet elevation. The bottom of the armor will be 12 feet below the existing level.

The project is currently in the engineering stage, having already had an environmental impact study and public hearings.

Local surfers worried that the revetment project might affect a favorite surf spot near the site, but the Army Corps of Engineers has said that they studied every factor, including wave motion, and found no cause for concern.

During the public meetings, some suggested moving the Lighthouse back from the bluffs, but the Corps study called that proposal "precarious" at best.

The study noted that the Lighthouse is slated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Moving it, it said, would cause the eventual destruction of the bluff. It stated that moving the Lighthouse would be cost prohibitive and said that since it is made of sandstone it could easily crumble during the move.



Abbey Faulhaber

A House-Senate conference committee has approved \$7 million to build an 840-foot-long stone revetment around the Montauk Lighthouse.

The Montauk Lighthouse is the oldest Lighthouse in New York State. Authorized by President George Washington, it was built in 1796, and every year receives thousands of visitors. Over the past 200 years, 200 feet of the point has eroded into the Atlantic. It now stands less than 100 feet from the edge of the bluff.

The revetment project is expected to cost about \$14 million, and will be paid for jointly between the federal government and other agencies, including the State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Gregory Donohue, the erosion control manager at the Lighthouse who has worked on the project for 16 years, said this week that he was "very excited" that funding for the project was moving forward. "A lot of us are cynical of a government alliance, but this is proof that it can really work," he said.

Lighthouse officials have hired a person to organize a fund-raiser and are working to come up with a strategy to raise money for the project, he said, adding, "we're hoping to find local contributors or anyone on the block. We're confident because we have a lot of equity in the project and it makes perfect sense."



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