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## Calarco Establishes South Shore Coastal Protection Task Force <sup>[1]</sup>



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7  
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Hauppauge, LI—Tuesday, May 7: Legislator Rob Calarco's bill (IR 1355) to establish the South Shore Coastal Protection Task Force passed today at the General Meeting of the Legislature. The bill, which set up an 11-member task force to develop recommendations for the protection of the environment and infrastructure on the South Shore and barrier islands of Suffolk County, requires the group to provide the Legislature with a written report within six months.

Legislator Calarco said, "Between Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Irene our southern shoreline and barrier islands have suffered tremendous damage. But even prior to the storms, our coastal areas have suffered from increased and recurring flooding. I introduced this bill to bring together a group of real experts to take a hard look at not just the impact those storm events have had on Suffolk's south coast, but at all of the natural and man-made factors affecting our South Shore Coastal region and come back with tangible recommendations about what we can do to mitigate the effects of future storms and address recurring flooding problems."

Legislator Calarco designed the Task Force to be composed entirely of scientific and engineering experts. The 11 members are designated in the bill as the Commissioners of

Suffolk County Health Services, Suffolk County Economic Development & Planning, and Suffolk County Public Works, one representative from the United States Geological Service, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Fire Island National Seashore, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Nature Conservancy, Stony Brook University, and finally two individuals with municipal experience in stormwater, coastal flooding and hazard mitigation, both to be selected by the County Legislature.

According to Calarco's bill, the South Shore Coastal Protection Task Force must also develop environmental protection strategies including proposals on how to alleviate ecological issues such as groundwater contamination, stormwater runoff, and algal blooms. "When looking at the impact these major storm events have had on our communities, we cannot focus solely on our manmade assets; we have to examine our groundwater, waterways, bay and other natural resources. The natural landscapes of the South Shore of Suffolk County are unique and beautiful, certainly worth protecting for future generations - that's why when I created the Task Force; I requested that they include concrete ideas for how we can protect our environment from future coastal storm events," said Calarco.

In addition to considering the most recent data available, the bill instructs the group to analyze existing plans and studies related to infrastructure and protection of the South Shore of Suffolk County, including for example, Suffolk County groundwater and clean water resource reports, Fire Island to Montauk Point Reformulation Study, the 1996 Fire Island Breach Contingency Plan, and the 2007 Barrier Island Brach Management Plan for Fire Island National Seashore. "I am asking the Task Force to take a look at the wealth of information that is out there on these issues and come back with some solid suggestions on what we can do to best guard the South Shore from further damage while also protecting the environment. It just makes sense for them to consider the many reports that already exist; there is no reason to re-invent the wheel. Moreover, by directing them to analyze existing information on specific topics, we can ensure the report they return has a broad perspective on how to best guard the South Shore from further storm damage while also protecting the environment. " said Legislator Calarco.

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