

Did Superstorm Sandy Accelerate the Inevitable Needed Modification and Upgrades of the Bay Park Sewage Treatment Plant?

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West Bay, in Hempstead Bay, has been declared as impaired by the U.S. EPA and the NYS DEC. The impairments are shellfishing closures and eutrophication, thought to be triggered by nitrogen discharges, stimulating excessive biomass production.

From 2010 to 2013, extensive marine environmental sampling and modelling by SoMAS ascertained that the bay was impaired, but low dissolved oxygen was only a component of it. Much of the problem is associated with the growth of the macroalgae, *Ulva*. The Bay Park Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) was identified as the major polluting source. From these studies, a lengthy total maximum daily load (TMDL) determination was initiated.

Superstorm Sandy (October 2012) flooded the STP, impeding proper operations until mid-December 2012. This storm further demonstrated that the Bay Park facility was causing adverse environmental impacts. It now appears that the tedious TMDL process will be subverted with a major redesign of most of the sewage of the bay so that the effluent will be discharged through an ocean outfall.