

## Dredge dumping ban sought for Buzzards Bay

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BOSTON - Environmentalists yesterday implored a state legislative committee to permanently ban the dumping of dredge spoils in Buzzards Bay, saying the water body is already threatened by overdevelopment.

The state Office of Coastal Zone Management last week withdrew a proposal to reopen a dredge dumping area one mile off West Falmouth in the face of widespread opposition from the Coalition for Buzzards Bay and local officials.

The dump-ing proposal led Rep. Eric Turkington, D-Falmouth, and Sen. Therese Murray, D-Plymouth, to file legislation for the ban. While Turkington told the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture that the ban might not be needed as urgently now, the coalition is still pushing for it as a future safeguard.

The area next to Cleveland Light would have been used for so-called "clean" dredge spoils from navigational dredging in Southeastern Massachusetts. The Falmouth site was closed to dredge spoils in 1989.

"The reopening of the spoils there again strikes no community in the area as a good thing, given what we now know about the ocean bottom and how we should take care of it," Turkington said.

Committee members are expected to act on the legislation as soon as next week.

Ben Bryant, a marine policy specialist at the Coalition for Buzzards Bay, told the committee the bay's habitat is already being harmed by overdevelopment, septic discharge and oil spills.

"Because of these impairments to Buzzards Bay, it just doesn't make sense to allow dredge dumping to occur in Buzzards Bay," Bryant said. "Dredge dumping has a number of ecological perils to it. The first immediate act is smothering the bottom as you dump the dredge spoils at the bottom of the bay."

Bryant said the state should be encouraging other uses for dredge spoils, such as road and parking lot construction and beach nourishment.

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