

## LETTERS

# We're Not Ready for Another Sandy

If our metropolitan area is to truly protect itself against future flood events, it must build an integrated system of movable barriers across our tidal inlets from Shinnecock to the Narrows

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Regarding Collin O'Mara and Scott Carmilani's "Better, Cheaper Protection Against the Next Superstorm Sandy" (op-ed, Nov. 1): The authors seem to have failed to discern the principal cause of property damage from this major storm event—storm surge. Coastline communities, including homes, businesses and critical infrastructure were devastated by floodwaters entering through our coastal inlets which immersed properties whose elevations were below the flood elevation.

The authors propose to protect our highly developed region from future superstorms like Sandy with natural infrastructure such as wetlands and upland forests, rather than hardscape infrastructure such as concrete and steel. By the time it hit New York, Sandy wasn't even a Category 1 hurricane, nor was it a significant rain event.

If our metropolitan area is to truly protect itself against future flood events, it must build a properly engineered continuous dune system along our southerly barrier islands together with an integrated system of movable barriers across our tidal inlets from Shinnecock to the Narrows.

Such systems are employed in the Netherlands, Russia, London and other locations around the world. Would such a system be costly? Certainly, but quite possibly it would be a fraction of the direct and indirect costs inflicted by a future Sandy event and the ensuing exit of the population and, with it, our tax base.

A protective system such as this would take years to implement. How much time do we have before our next devastating storm? The clock is ticking.

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