

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment &
Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment &
Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chair McCollum and Ranking Member Joyce:

As you consider the wide range of requests related to protecting America's natural resources, we respectfully urge your continued support for restoration of Long Island Sound.

We appreciate your commitment to safeguarding and restoring the water quality and diverse habitats of the Sound in previous fiscal years, and look forward to your continued attention to the great needs facing this Nationally Significant Estuary. For FY2021, we respectfully request that the Long Island Sound be funded at \$30.4 million. This level of funding is critical to protecting and restoring this national treasure, and is essential to translate an emerging nitrogen pollution plan into action.

The Sound is a national treasure whose watershed covers all or part of six states. For our delegation, we consider the Sound to be our own national park. Because of its significant and unique ecological and economic value, Long Island Sound was one of the first three estuaries recognized in 1985 under the National Estuary Program. More than twenty-five million citizens live within an hour drive of its shores, and the resulting development has led to increasingly poor ecosystem health. Despite these challenges, the Sound contributes an estimated \$31 billion annually to the regional economy from commercial and recreational fishing, ecotourism and other water dependent businesses.

With federal leadership and this important funding, a strong partnership has been forged among federal, state, and local agencies as well as regional and local stakeholders to coordinate the natural resource and watershed management activities around Long Island Sound. As part of this effort, the States, Counties and municipalities of Connecticut and New York have invested hundreds of millions of their taxpayer dollars to restore the Sound's water quality and protect its coastal resources. The federal government investment will allow local towns and the states to identify and begin the most efficient and cost- effective actions to reduce this threat.

In the 115th Congress, we recognized the importance of the Sound by providing a five-year reauthorization of the Long Island Sound Program. The Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Act, included as part of the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, authorized up to \$65 million to help protect and restore the environmentally and economically vital resources of the Sound. Investments in implementing the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Act present an important opportunity for the Environmental Protection Agency to further its work along the Sound in a collaborative, non-regulatory manner with state and local conservation programs. The resulting framework for land protection activities benefits Long Island Sound, but also can serve as a national model for such partnerships.

To ensure the mission of the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Act are not threatened by mounting environmental pressures, we believe it very important to support the Sound with a significant funding increase for FY2021. Therefore, we are requesting your support for \$30.4 million in funding for the Long Island Sound. We recognize the difficult budgetary constraints facing the Committee at this time and appreciate your efforts towards protecting the Long Island Sound for current and future generations.

We look forward to working with you both towards the successful restoration of Long Island Sound.

Sincerely,

ROSA L. DeLAURO
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, Long Island
Sound Caucus

LEE ZELDIN
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, Long Island
Sound Caucus

THOMAS R. SUOZZI
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JOHN B. LARSON
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JOE COURTNEY
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KATHLEEN M. RICE
Member of Congress

ANTONIO DELGADO
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JAMES HIMES
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