



Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

REAUTHORIZE THE LONG ISLAND SOUND RESTORATION AND STEWARDSHIP ACT

JUSTIFICATION

In 1985, Congress created the *Long Island Sound Study* (LISS) to identify and address the major environmental problems affecting the Long Island Sound. The LISS is authorized at \$40 million annually through the LIS Restoration Act. The LISS is a collaborative effort, which includes government agencies, not-for-profits, and individuals, all working to restore and protect the Sound and its watershed. Through the LISS, a bi-state Comprehensive Management Plan has been developed and is currently being implemented.

In 2006, Congress passed the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act, which is authorized at \$25 million annually. This important legislation identifies key areas surrounding the Sound and authorizes monies for preservation and public access improvements. These critically important acts were combined to create the Long Island Sound Restoration & Stewardship Act. *The Long Island Sound Stewardship and Restoration Act is scheduled to expire in 2023—CCE urges Congress to reauthorize this important program.*

As an Estuary of National Significance, the immense value of the Long Island Sound cannot be overstated. Twenty-three million people live within 50 miles of the Sound's beaches. Residents of New York and Connecticut depend on the Sound for recreational opportunities, including fishing, sailing, and swimming. LIS is also a critical component to a healthy economy. It generates \$9.4 billion annually to the regional economy through commercial and recreational fishing, boating, and tourism.

The Long Island Sound Restoration & Stewardship Act monies represent the backbone to the entire protection and restoration program for the Sound. Despite advances in restoration, problems persist. Continued investment is needed to continue progress in restore the health of the Long Island Sound.

Progress has been made in reducing nitrogen, reducing the extent of hypoxia in the Sound, improving water quality, and restoring habitat throughout the LIS watershed. There have been 2,239 acres of coastal habitat restored, 5232.35 acres of ecologically important habitat preserved, and 432.9 miles of new fish passage created. Pods of dolphins have been spotted in the Sound during summer months, another key indicator of progress. Although progress has been made, more needs to be done. Hypoxia still persists in summer months, toxic algae blooms are found in harbors and bays, nitrogen from antiquated septs are still polluting waters, and stormwater run-off continues to contaminate waters and close beaches.

Without reauthorization of the Act, funding for critical programs to protect and restore the Sound is in limbo. Reauthorization the Restoration & Stewardship Act is needed to provide adequate funding to continue programs needed to protect public health, our local economy, and quality of life.

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS
Reauthorization of the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Act

CCE is a 120,000-member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment

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