

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 30, 2016

Honorable Gina McCarthy
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20160

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

We write to you in strong support of your recently released EPA Nitrogen Strategy for restoring ecological vigor and health to our beloved Long Island Sound and to seek your leadership to help gather federal resources needed to convert this bold strategy into action.

As you know, eight regional environmental organizations got behind the Nitrogen Strategy with a vision to further enhance the control of the nitrogen pollution that has been devastating Long Island Sound's ecosystem for decades. We recognize the need for federal and state funding to empower the regional action plans that will allow communities all across the Sound and our large tributaries to identify the most cost effective investments in nitrogen pollution reductions.

The importance of nitrogen reduction in the Long Island Sound is multi-fold. If implemented, the EPA Strategy will foster life in the Sound by reducing the low-oxygen dead zones that are currently suffocating fish and other aquatic life indigenous to the Sound. The strategy will further reduce and eventually eliminate algal blooms, improving the health, use, and beauty of the Sound. The strategy will allow salt marshes to subsist, thereby protecting local neighborhoods by absorbing floodwaters and coastal storms. Finally, the strategy will lead to improved seagrass and shellfish health and the mitigation of localized ocean acidification.

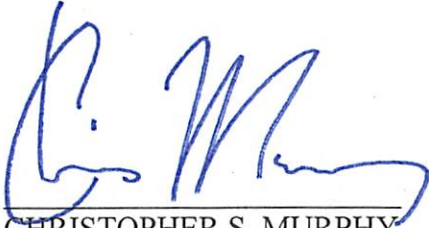
We applaud the comprehensive nature of the strategy, insofar as it looks upstream in order to ensure that responsibility for the Sound's health includes sources of pollution in the three major tributaries that extend beyond Connecticut and New York and into Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire. All states and communities within the Long Island Sound watershed will have a role in this strategy. The Watershed Council is backing the strategy and willing to give their assistance to implement it.

We agree that the EPA Nitrogen Strategy is an additional ambitious step toward restoring the Long Island Sound and many of these organizations are willing to work with the EPA and states to meet the deadlines set out in the plan. The key to the implementation of this plan will be the setting of explicit scientific endpoints and investment in the surrounding communities, giving them the actionable tools and resources to meet these endpoints. We hope that you will prioritize EPA funding and resources toward reaching these goals.

While significant progress has been made over the last decade in Connecticut and New York to curb nitrogen levels and reduce hypoxia in the Sound, last summer we still witnessed local fish kills, turtle die-offs, toxic tides and closed beaches. We cannot let last summer become the new

norm. We are excited and encouraged that the EPA is aggressively pursuing an action plan that will rescue local bays and harbors, ensure more oxygen in the western Sound, and tackle nitrogen input from the three main rivers originating from northeast states. Swift implementation and adequate resources will be the key to saving the Sound. We look forward to this renewed EPA effort and your further support in identifying this project as a funding priority.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senator



KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
United States Senator



CHARLES E. SCHUMER
United States Senator



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senator



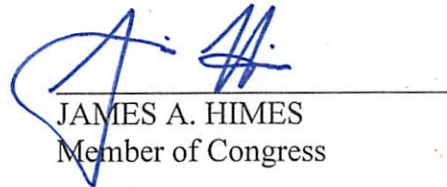
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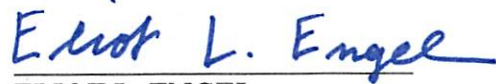
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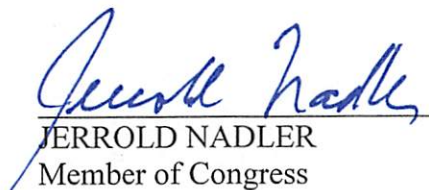
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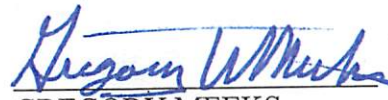


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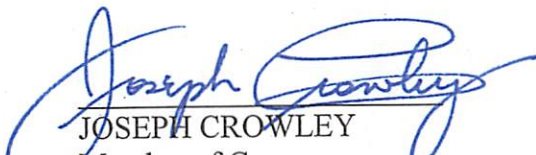

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