

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 13, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Lankford  
Chairman  
Senate Financial Services & General  
Government Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Graves  
Chairman  
House Financial Services & General  
Government Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Coons  
Ranking Member  
Senate Financial Services & General  
Government Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Quigley  
Ranking Member  
House Financial Services & General  
Government Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Shelby, Frelinghuysen, Lankford and Graves, Vice Chairman Leahy, and Ranking Members Lowey, Coons and Quigley,

We write today to urge the inclusion of bill language in the final Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) appropriations bill to prohibit the General Services Administration (GSA) from expending funds to market or sell Plum Island.

Language addressing this issue was included through the voice vote passage of a bipartisan amendment offered by Representatives Zeldin, Courtney, DeLauro, Rice, Suozzi, and Faso during consideration of the FSGG appropriations bill in the House of Representatives. Senators Gillibrand, Blumenthal, and Murphy offered an identical amendment during Senate floor consideration of H.R. 6147, but, unfortunately, this amendment was not included in the final Senate-passed bill. We request that you agree to the House-passed language prohibiting the GSA from expending funds to market or sell Plum Island in a final FSGG spending bill or an omnibus appropriations package.

In 2008, Congress passed Public Law 110-324, which mandated the sale of Plum Island in order to help fund the new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) in Manhattan,

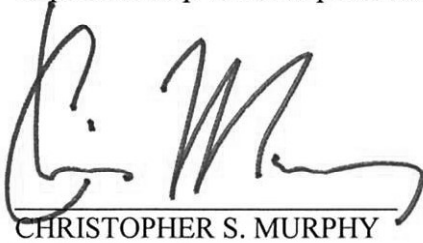
Kansas. Selling Plum Island to finance the NBAF is no longer necessary because P.L. 113-76, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, appropriated \$404 million for the NBAF. Construction of the facility began in May 2015 and the NBAF is expected to be fully operational by 2022-2023. We support the construction of the NBAF and believe this facility fills a vital role as a premiere research and diagnostic facility for animal diseases. However, the success of the NBAF does not depend on the sale of Plum Island, and this outdated mandate must be repealed.

Constituents in our two states oppose the sale of Plum Island and would like to see the sale stopped in order to ensure that efforts to preserve the island are successful. The 840-acre island is a critical habitat for over 200 bird species, many of which use the island as part of their North-South migration along the Atlantic flyway, and is the most important haul-out site for grey and harbor seals in southern New England. It is also home to 40 rare and protected plant species, as well as sea turtles, marine eelgrass beds, and numerous fish populations. The ecological importance of this island was acknowledged in its recognition as a "New York State Significant Coastal Fish & Wildlife Habitat"<sup>1</sup> by the state of New York and a federally-designated area under the *Coastal Barrier Resources Act*.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to its ecological significance, the island is home to numerous important historic sites. The Plum Island Lighthouse, for example, is in the National Register of Historic Places. The island also houses the remains of Fort Terry, an army barracks and weapons storage site built in 1897 that was used in the Spanish-American War and World War I. In World War II, Fort Terry was used to track and monitor German submarine activity on the Atlantic coast. These historic sites amplify the importance of ensuring efforts to preserve and protect this island continue.

In conclusion, we reiterate our request that you include language from the House-passed FSGG bill that prohibits the General Services Administration (GSA) from using any funds to market or sell Plum Island. While this language would not repeal the outdated mandate for the sale of Plum Island, it would prevent the GSA from taking action to sell Plum Island and is an important step towards protecting this island.

Sincerely,



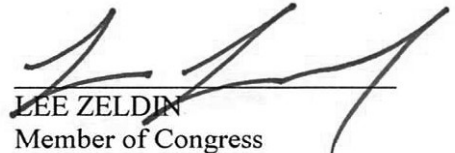
CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
United States Senate



KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND  
United States Senate



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senate



LEE ZELDIN  
Member of Congress

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/programs/consistency/Habitats/LongIsland/Plum\\_Gut.pdf](https://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/programs/consistency/Habitats/LongIsland/Plum_Gut.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://docs.dos.ny.gov/opd-lwrp/LWRP/Southold\\_T/AmendmentI/Final/SoutholdAmenSII.pdf](https://docs.dos.ny.gov/opd-lwrp/LWRP/Southold_T/AmendmentI/Final/SoutholdAmenSII.pdf)

*Joe Courtney*

JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress

*Kathleen M. Rice*

KATHLEEN M. RICE  
Member of Congress

*Rosa L. DeLauro*

ROSA DELAURO  
Member of Congress

*John J. Faso*

JOHN J. FASO  
Member of Congress