

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

March 24, 2016

The Honorable Gina McCarthy  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Re: Proposed Rule to Amend Restrictions on Use of the CLDS/WLDS

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

We write today to share our views on the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed rule to amend the restrictions on use of dredged material disposal sites in Central Long Island Sound (CLDS) and Western Long Island Sound (WLDS).

As representatives from Connecticut and members of the Congressional Long Island Sound Caucus, we understand firsthand the importance of preserving and protecting the environment in and around Long Island Sound for future generations to enjoy. However, we also understand that this ecological treasure is an economic driver that supports more than 55,000 jobs region-wide. This is why we have long supported the Army Corps of Engineer's Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP) and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for Long Island Sound—two documents that highlight the need to balance environmental and economic priorities by detailing the most environmentally suitable placement options for dredged materials from all proposed federal navigation projects.

Looking forward, we believe the EPA proposed rule to amend restrictions on the CLDS and WLDS reflects many of the overall goals of the DMMP for the Long Island Sound region. In an effort to reaffirm the goals of the DMMP, the CLDS/WLDS proposed rule examines alternative placement opportunities for dredged material before resorting to open-water placement and highlights the need to continuously monitor and research the environmental impacts of all dredging activities, past and future.

However, we remain concerned that language carried over from the 2005 Rule regarding "practicable alternatives" and "reasonable incremental costs" is not defined in clearer terms. In order to effectively maintain the balance between the environmental and economic benefits of Long Island Sound, some certainty regarding the potential cost of maintenance projects must be included in a final language. Knowing that the makeup of dredged material from each navigation project is different, we understand that placement alternatives need to be examined on a case-by-case basis. Notably, the EPA itself recognizes in the proposed rule that the lack of clarity on future project costs "could result in deferral of maintenance or improvement projects that could impact navigation." We hope that a final rule will more clearly address this issue.

Connecticut's maritime industry has a long and rich history. As the industry makes a resurgence, it is important to note that without reliable and timely dredging, our deep-water ports in Bridgeport, New Haven, and New London have seen an 80 percent decrease in imports over the last decade. A comprehensive dredging plan for Long Island Sound needs to be a vital

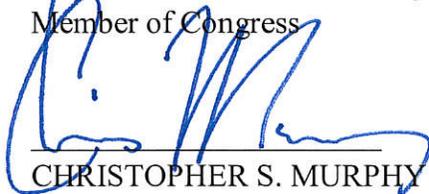
component of the Connecticut Port Authority's goal to expand our major ports and grow our maritime economy. Connecticut has been responsibly dredging using open-water placement for 35 years and we believe that continued use of the CLDS and the WLDS, along with an increased effort to find sustainable on-land solutions for suitable dredged materials, will provide the Long Island Sound region with a balanced approach for future waterway maintenance projects.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important topic. We look forward to working in partnership with the EPA and the Army Corps on the timely approval of the proposed amendments to the restrictions on use of the Central and Western Long Island Sound Disposal Sites, and continued constructive engagement with stakeholders across the Long Island Sound region on managing dredging needs in the future.

Sincerely,



JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
United States Senate



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senate



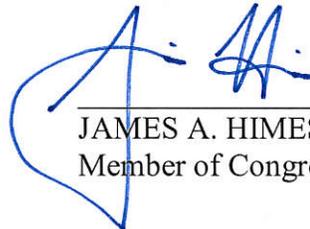
ROSA L. DELAURO  
Co-Chair Long Island Sound Caucus  
Member of Congress



JOHN B. LARSON  
Member of Congress



ELIZABETH H. ESTY  
Member of Congress



JAMES A. HIMES  
Member of Congress

Cc: Stephen Perkins  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
New England Regional Office  
5 Post Office Square, Suite 100  
Mail Code: OEP06-3  
Boston, MA 02109-3912