

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

April 3, 2019

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
House Appropriations Committee  
H-307 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Roybal-Allard and Ranking Member Fleischmann:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2020 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, we strongly encourage you to protect local control and the environment by helping preserve Plum Island, New York. We request that previous appropriations language ordering the sale of this island to the highest bidder be repealed by including the attached language in this year's bill. Our requested language will also permanently protect the island by requiring any future disposition of the island be only for the purposes of conservation, education, and research.

The federal government has owned Plum Island, NY, since 1899. This 840 acre island has hosted the Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC), a critical research facility for the USDA, since 1954 and is now under the jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Scientists at PIADC conduct important research into cures and treatments for animal diseases that could bring America's entire agricultural economy to a halt and pose a threat to national security. In 2005, DHS announced that PIADC would be replaced by a new federal facility in Kansas. To offset the cost of this relocation, appropriations bills in 2009 and 2012 explicitly called for the private sale of Plum Island. The traditional interagency consultation process regarding the disposal of federal property was bypassed, fast tracking the potential sale of this island without consulting the local community or other federal agencies. This statutory mandate was based on a false assumption that a sale could offset the cost of the new facility, when the true value of the island, including clean-up costs, is still not clear. The Town of Southold, New York has local jurisdiction over the island and has passed ordinances preventing any private development. This factor, coupled with the significant clean-up and environmental mitigation costs associated with closing the PIADC facility gives Plum Island little to no commercial value.

Consequently, the federal government may receive minimal compensation for the sale. Furthermore, according to [a DHS report issued in April 2016](#), the new site in Manhattan, Kansas is already fully paid for through a combination of federal appropriations and funding from the State of Kansas.

Situated at the gateway of the Long Island Sound, Plum Island, New York is valued by the local community as a critical resource for research and for its abundance as a cultural, historical, and natural resource. It is the express wishes of local residents on both sides of the Sound that this island is not sold to the highest bidder. It is essential that local control be upheld and that this island is preserved for research, education, and conservation. That is why we, a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers from New York and Connecticut, respectfully request that you include language in the fiscal year 2020 Homeland Security Appropriations bill that repeals the mandate to sell this island. Repeal of this flawed mandate will open up the door to the traditional interagency consultation process for federal property disposal when the current PIADC facility closes and its operations are moved to the new National Agri- and Bio- Defense Facility in Manhattan, Kansas in the coming years. Removing the statutory requirement to sell this island to the highest bidder means that the priorities of local governments, community groups, and taxpayers on both sides of Long Island Sound can be upheld. In addition, the natural beauty of the island can be preserved and the world class laboratory facility at PIADC can be repurposed for education and research. Our requested language will ensure that the GSA does not sell this precious island to a developer.

Your full and fair consideration of our request is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kevin Dowling in Congressman Zeldin's office at (202) 225-3826, or [kevin.dowling@mail.house.gov](mailto:kevin.dowling@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



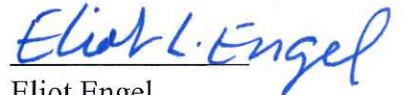
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Lee Zeldin  
Member of Congress



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Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



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Eliot Engel  
Member of Congress

Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress

Christopher H. Smith  
Member of Congress

Jim Himes  
Member of Congress

John B. Larson  
Member of Congress

Peter T. King  
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress

Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

**Requested FY2020 Language:**

***REPEAL OF REQUIREMENT TO SELL CERTAIN FEDERAL PROPERTY IN PLUM ISLAND, NEW YORK.***

*(a) Sale.—Section 540 of title V of division D of the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009 ([Public Law 110-329](#); 122 Stat. 3688) is repealed.*

*(b) Determination.—Section 538 of title V of division D of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 ([Public Law 112-74](#); 125 Stat. 976) is repealed.*

***PRESERVATION OF PLUM ISLAND, NEW YORK FOR CONSERVATION, EDUCATION, AND RESEARCH.***

*In the case of the disposition of Plum Island, New York, the property and assets subject to such disposition shall, under chapter 5 of subtitle I of title 40, United States Code, be limited to the purposes of conservation, education, and research.*