Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 1, 2015

Lt. General Tom Bostick
Commanding General and Chief of Engineers
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Headquarters
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Re: File Number NAE-2015

Dear Lt. General Bostick:

We write today in support of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Draft Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP) and Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for Long Island Sound.

As representatives from Connecticut, a state with 332 miles of coastline, coves, and harbors on Long Island Sound, we applaud the Army Corps for identifying new environmentally sound alternatives for the handling of dredging materials, such as beach nourishment and wetlands restoration. Knowing that only a small portion of dredged materials can be used on land beneficially, we also understand the continued need for open-water disposal options currently in use in Connecticut waters and support continuing this disposal method for fine-grained materials suitable for open-water placement. As members of the Congressional Long Island Sound Caucus, we have long been advocates for protecting and rehabilitating this critical natural, recreation and economic resource. To that end, we commend the Army Corps for identifying a variety of alternative management options and would like to see the Army Corps pursue beneficial use alternatives whenever feasible.

In addition to the critical goal of protecting the Long Island Sound, access to a range of dredged material placement options is absolutely vital to our state's economy – and that of the entire Long Island Sound region. According to the DMMP, economic activities that utilize Long Island Sound waterways contribute more than $9 billion annually in economic output. Additionally, these economic activities support more than 55,000 jobs in the Long Island Sound region. As important, our region is home to a range of federal and military facilities dependent on the viability of accessible and cost-effective placement options. If this dredging plan does not move forward, it is estimated that the region will see a fifteen percent dip in navigation-dependent economic activity revenue in the next two decades, and significant – and perhaps prohibitive – increases in costs for the private, commercial and federal stakeholders.

With Connecticut's newly-minted Port Authority officially coming into existence on July 1, 2015, our state is poised for resurgence in the maritime industry. As noted by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, imports at deep-water ports in Bridgeport, New Haven, and New London have decreased by 80 percent since 2006. Establishment of the new Port Authority, and increased focus on strategic investments needed to expand our major ports creates a significant opportunity to turn this trend around, create jobs,

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

and grow Connecticut's maritime economy. This, however, will be contingent on a continued effort to maintain our channels and harbors properly.

The DMMP and PEIS are the result of years of research and planning by the Army Corps and the Environmental Protection Agency, through constructive consultation with the States of Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island. They provide a comprehensive management framework of environmentally responsible and cost-effective disposal solutions for the varying types of dredged materials—specifically outlining plans for a myriad of federal dredging projects in the Long Island Sound region. Connecticut has been responsibly dredging using open-water placement for 35 years and we are pleased that the DMMP, paired with 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 the timely approval of the DMMP 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

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

CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senator

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senator

JAMES A. HIMES
Member of Congress

JOHN B. LARSON
Member of Congress

ELIZABETH H. ESTY
Member of Congress

Cc: Meghan Quinn, LIS DMMP/PEIS Project Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
New England District