

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE:
1517 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-3826
FAX: (202) 225-3143



PATCHOGUE OFFICE:
31 OAK STREET, SUITE 20
PATCHOGUE, NY 11772
PHONE: (631) 289-1097
FAX: (631) 289-1268

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

ZELDIN.HOUSE.GOV

FACEBOOK.COM/REPLEEZELDIN
TWITTER.COM/REPLEEZELDIN

Congressman Lee M. Zeldin
First Congressional District of New York

June 30, 2016

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

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

As the Representative of affected communities on the Long Island Sound, I write you in strong opposition to the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed rule: "Ocean Disposal; Designation of a Dredged Material Disposal Site in Eastern Region of Long Island Sound; Connecticut (81 FR 24748)." This proposal to extend the open water dumping of dredge waste in the Eastern Long Island sound for up to 30 years is unacceptable and shows an extreme lack of concern for public input after nearly a year of outcry from the citizens of Long Island in opposition to the revised Dredged Materials Management Plan (DMMP). What is particularly egregious is that your agency previously committed to closing both of the Eastern Long Sound disposal sites (ELDS), Cornfield Shoals and New London, by December 23, 2016. As the agency tasked with protecting the environment, you must reject this proposed rule and stand by your commitment to close these sites to open water dumping by the end of this year.

The people of Long Island and their elected representatives have made it clear to the EPA and to the Army Corps of Engineers that open water dumping in the Long Island Sound must be phased out, not expanded. Specifically concentrating the dumping site at New London or Cornfield Shoals, which is what the proposed rule is calling for, would concentrate open water dumping in one ecologically vulnerable area while other sites further west would enjoy a more rigorous phase out. The New London site is adjacent to Fisher's Island, New York where oystering has been a way of life for centuries. The threat to water quality posed by an expansion of open water dumping at this site translates directly to a loss of important seafood jobs, and is just one explicit example of why this proposed rule must be rejected.

The Long Island Sound is an EPA designated Estuary of National Significance and one of the nation's most populated watersheds. Through work with your agency, state and local governments, and dedicated citizens on the ground, progress has been made to improve water quality and ecosystem health. Particularly in the eastern Long Island Sound where the maritime economy has been a way of life for centuries, our seafood industry is making a historic comeback. All of this we owe to the improvement of this vital ecosystem so it is critical that the EPA and Army Corps do not impede this progress through this misguided proposal.

I urge you to reject this proposed rule and look forward to working with you and your agency on solutions that improve the environment of the Long Island Sound. Should you require any further information, please contact Kevin Dowling in my Washington office at 202-225-3826 or kevin.dowling@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress (NY- 1st)