



Jamaica Bay Forum

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At approximately 20 square miles and over 13000 acres, Jamaica Bay is the largest natural open space in New York City.

STATE, CITY REACH AGREEMENT TO PROTECT LONG ISLAND SOUND



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Author	Message
<p>jbuttner Fleet Admiral 500 Posts</p>   <p>Joined: 28 Mar 2003 Posts: 727 Location: Spring Creek</p>	<p> Posted: Wed Jan 11, 2006 12:55 pm Post subject: STATE, CITY REACH AGREEMENT TO PROTECT LONG ISLAND SOUND </p> <hr/> <p>News from The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation For more information: DEC: Maureen Wren, 518-402-8000; AG: Marc Violette, 518-473-5525; DEP: Ian Michaels 718-595-6600</p> <p>City To Improve Water Quality With Significant Decreases in Nitrogen Discharges</p> <p>ALBANY, NY -- (01/10/2006; 1030)(EIS) -- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Denise M. Sheehan and Attorney General Eliot Spitzer today announced that New York State and New York City have reached an agreement that will sharply reduce nitrogen discharges from wastewater treatment plants on the East River. The agreement will help greatly improve water quality in Long Island Sound.</p> <p>DEC Commissioner Sheehan said, "Under Governor George Pataki's leadership, DEC has made significant investments to improve the Sound and New York City's efforts will be instrumental in further restoring and protecting this resource for future generations. This agreement is the culmination of years of discussion on how to best protect Long Island Sound one of the most important and valuable estuaries in the nation and I would like to thank all those involved with this negotiation for their hard work and perseverance."</p> <p>Attorney General Spitzer said, "Clean water is critical to ensure the quality of life for millions of New Yorkers, as well as ensuring a vibrant and healthy habitat for wildlife. Under this settlement, the City of New York will upgrade its sewage treatment plants and improve water quality from Jamaica Bay to the East River to Long Island Sound. I commend the City for making the commitment to reducing water pollution in the region."</p> <p>New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Emily Lloyd said, "New York City has made remarkable progress cleaning up its harbor in the last several decades, and this agreement highlights the Bloomberg Administration's sustained commitment to waterfront revitalization and to improving waterfront recreation and beach areas. The new, phased approach to nitrogen reduction will vastly reduce nutrient loading in the waters of the upper East River and Long Island Sound</p>

bordering the City. Years of research and study have led to the conclusion that this is the most efficient way to tackle this problem. The City will also move forward aggressively with a watershed protection plan for Jamaica Bay, a critical and threatened body of water with extensive coastlines in Brooklyn and Queens."

Excessive discharges of nitrogen, a common component of wastewater, degrade water quality in the Sound by fueling an overgrowth of algae. The algae die, settle to the bottom and decay, using up oxygen in the process. The resulting low levels of oxygen diminish the abundance, diversity and health of fish and shellfish populations and increase fish mortality. Reducing the amount of nitrogen that flows out of the treatment plants is necessary for the City to meet limits established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the DEC under the Clean Water Act.

The City and State of New York have been engaged in discussions and legal actions concerning reductions in nitrogen discharges from City wastewater treatment facilities to Long Island Sound since 1999. The parties will now submit the agreement to the New York State Supreme Court, New York County, for approval. The agreement will become effective upon approval by the Court.

Under the new agreement, New York City will build on prior achievements and undertake a phased approach that, by 2017, will result in a 58.5 percent reduction in nitrogen discharges from its wastewater treatment plants. Extensive analysis has demonstrated that reductions of this magnitude are necessary to ensure a healthy marine environment and robust commercial and recreational fisheries in Long Island Sound.

The agreement also provides for the City to construct upgraded wastewater facilities at the 26th Ward Water Pollution Control Plant on Jamaica Bay, conduct further studies on Jamaica Bay, and submit by October 2006 a comprehensive plan to achieve water quality standards for Jamaica Bay.

Constantine Sidamon-Eristoff, Chairman of Audubon New York, said, "It is an historic day and Audubon applauds Governor Pataki, Mayor Bloomberg, Attorney General Spitzer, DEC Commissioner Sheehan and DEP Commissioner Lloyd and staff for this tremendous milestone. They have done an incredible service to the Sound, its wildlife and citizenry."

David J. Miller, Executive Director of Audubon New York, said, "This is the single most significant action over the past 15 years to reduce nitrogen pollution into Long Island Sound. The Agreement takes the clean up plan and past agreements off the shelf and into direct actions benefitting the Sound."

James T.B.Tripp, General Counsel of Environmental Defense, said, "While nitrogen is a necessary nutrient, excessive nitrogen is the nation's biggest coastal water pollutant adversely affecting marine ecosystems. DEP's plan constitutes a wastewater nitrogen reduction commitment of unprecedented scale in the United States and probably the world. The State and City and their two environmental commissioners, Denise Sheehan and Emily Lloyd, deserve enormous credit for having achieved a credible balance between timely, deep nitrogen reductions by 2017 and opportunities for technological innovation that will control costs."

Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment, said, "The reduction of nitrogen is a critical component needed to address water quality in the Long Island Sound. New York City's commitment to reducing nitrogen pollution in the Sound will have a meaningful and significant impact on the restoration on this national treasure. Long Island Sound has made significant progress over the past ten years. This agreement will ensure more progress over the next ten years."

Eric A. Goldstein, Co-Director of the Urban Program at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said, "We look forward to reviewing and commenting on this major new development. We congratulate Commissioner Sheehan, Commissioner Lloyd, and Attorney General Spitzer for their efforts. As we move forward on nitrogen, it is also tremendously exciting to have the opportunity to work with these agencies in their initiative to save Jamaica Bay."

The new agreement follows an April 8, 2005 judgment by the Supreme Court in New York County that

denied the City's effort to change an earlier-approved plan to upgrade the City's wastewater treatment plants and reduce nitrogen in Long Island Sound. Today's agreement with the City resolves that dispute.

The consent judgment includes compliance dates for all construction activities; penalties in the event of noncompliance in the future; and interim targets for nitrogen reduction. The City is also required to pay a civil penalty in the amount of \$2.7 million to the New York State Marine Resources Account, a funding source dedicated to the management of marine resources and habitat.

In addition to the civil penalty, the City has agreed to provide \$5.3 million to perform Environmental Benefit Projects that will support the restoration of waters in and around New York City. Among the proposed projects are: controlling stormwater pollutants, restoring tidal wetlands, and undertaking comprehensive efforts to remove litter and debris from stream banks around Jamaica Bay and other waters.

It's only numbers

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