



January 23, 2020

Senator Christine Cohen, Representative Mike Demicco, Senator Craig Miner, Representative Stephen Harding
Co-Chairs and Ranking Members, Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Long Island Sound Blue Plan

Dear Senator Cohen, Representative Demicco, Senator Miner, Representative Harding, and members of the Environment Committee:

I am pleased and honored to transmit for your consideration and action the final draft of the Long Island Sound Resource and Use Inventory and Blue Plan.

The Blue Plan has been prepared pursuant to Public Act 15-66, **An Act Concerning a Long Island Sound Resource Inventory and Blue Plan**. Intended to support both water-dependent uses and the marine environment, this pioneering marine spatial planning initiative compiled an inventory of Long Island Sound resources and uses, and established siting priorities, standards, and science-based management practices to foster sustainable uses, activities, and habitats. These place-based siting priorities, standards, and practices will, in turn, protect the Sound's future environmental and economic vitality, and help preserve the traditional connections that matter to the people of Connecticut who use this natural resource and seek to wisely manage its use. Stakeholders, project proponents, and permitting authorities that use this tool will all have access to the same information in order to evaluate and substantiate objective and well-informed decisions.

The Plan was prepared by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in partnership with the Blue Plan Advisory Committee, along with extensive input from additional stakeholders and researchers. Built on the best available science and stakeholder expertise, the Plan incorporates the contributions of over 2,000 individuals including marine trades, business representatives, recreation enthusiasts, state and local public officials, tribes, conservation professionals, and other maritime interests. Public outreach included three public hearings, several regional meetings in Connecticut and Long Island, NY and almost 100 meetings and webinars; responding to countless individual inquiries by email, phone, and in person; and addressing 37 formal written comments received during the official 90-day public comment period.

Through this extensive development process, we gathered a large amount of information on where important ecological features and human uses occur in Long Island Sound. This information is collated, synthesized, and made broadly available through the Blue Plan documents, including the Long Island Sound Resource and Use Inventory and online map viewer. All Blue Plan products, including the final draft Plan along with the Resource and Use Inventory and supporting documents and videos, are available at the DEEP website at www.ct.gov/deep/lisblueplan. The Environment Committee, your fellow legislators, and all other Long Island Sound stakeholders are particularly encouraged to visit the online [Blue Plan Map Viewer](#) for an interactive dive into the fascinating data that has been compiled and mapped.

I would like to thank our partners, UConn Sea Grant and The Nature Conservancy, the dedicated volunteer members of the Blue Plan Advisory Committee, members of the Ecological Experts Group, the Blue Plan Working Groups, and many others too numerous to name who contributed their insights and perspectives towards making the Blue Plan a more effective document and process. If you have any questions regarding the Blue Plan or any other marine spatial planning concerns, please feel free to contact Mandi Careathers of my staff at (860) 424-3109 or at Mandi.Careathers@ct.gov.

I look forward to further discussing the Blue Plan with the Environment Committee and other interested legislators during the Committee hearing and elsewhere. It is my hope and expectation that, with the Environment Committee's endorsement, the General Assembly will vote to approve the Blue Plan and confirm this important initiative for protecting the resources and uses of Long Island Sound so vitally important to Connecticut's past, present, and future.

Sincerely,



Katie S. Dykes
Commissioner
Department of Energy and
Environmental Protection

Enclosures: Long Island Sound Resource and Use Inventory and Blue Plan
Executive Summary, Long Island Sound Blue Plan (for cc's)

Cc: Governor Ned Lamont
Senate President Pro Tem Martin Looney
Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff
Senate Minority Leader Len Fasano
Speaker of the House Joe Aresimowicz
House Majority Leader Matt Ritter
House Minority Leader Themis Klarides
Legislative Coastal Caucus
Blue Plan Advisory Committee Members