



January 4, 2021

Senator Christine Cohen, Co-Chair  
Representative Dorinda Borer, Co-Chair  
Senator Craig Miner, Ranking Member  
Representative Stephen Harding, Ranking Member  
Environment Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200  
Hartford, CT 06106

**Re: Long Island Sound Blue Plan**

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

I am pleased and honored to renew my transmittal of the final draft of the Long Island Sound Resource and Use Inventory and Blue Plan for your endorsement and approval.

As you will recall, I had submitted the Blue Plan to the Environment Committee last January 23, for consideration during the 2020 legislative session. The Environment Committee held a hearing on February 21, 2020, at which numerous stakeholders, legislators and members of the public expressed their strong support. On February 28, the Committee favorably reported out [HJ 1](#), recommending approval of the Blue Plan by the full General Assembly. Unfortunately, as with all other legislation during the 2020 regular session, further action on HJ 1 was foreclosed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Today, I am renewing my submittal of Long Island Sound Blue Plan; nothing has changed in the text of the Inventory and Plan that is before your Committee, although new outreach materials have been added to the website and some mapping data has been updated. The reason for this renewal of submission is that it is now a differently constituted General Assembly from that when the original submission was made.

To sum up its history, the Blue Plan was called for by the Connecticut General Assembly through 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 people. Using these tools, stakeholders, project proponents, and permitting authorities will all have the same information to evaluate and substantiate more objective and well-informed decisions.

The Plan was prepared by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in partnership with the statutory 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 2000 individuals including marine trades, business representatives, recreation enthusiasts, state and local public officials, tribes, conservation professionals, and other maritime interests. Prior to originally submitting the Plan to you last year, the Blue Plan Development Team had hosted three public hearings, several regional meetings in Connecticut and Long Island, and almost 100 meetings and webinars; responded to countless individual inquiries by email, phone, and in person; and addressed 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, story maps and videos, are available at the DEEP website at [www.ct.gov/deep/lisblueplan](http://www.ct.gov/deep/lisblueplan). The Environment Committee, along with 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.

As we near the end of the process, 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 invaluable 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 James Albis of my staff at (860) 967-8524 or at [James.Albis@ct.gov](mailto:James.Albis@ct.gov).

I look forward to further discussing the Blue Plan with the Environment Committee and other interested legislators, during the Committee hearing as well as 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 that are 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 M. Looney  
Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff  
Senate Minority Leader Kevin Kelly  
Speaker of the House Matthew Ritter  
House Majority Leader Jason Rojas  
House Minority Leader Vincent J. Candelora  
Legislative Coastal Caucus  
Blue Plan Advisory Committee Members