

# 1994 Long Island Sound Agreement

Long Island Sound is a national treasure, to be prized for its beauty, abundant and diverse resources, and recreational and commercial opportunities. For many, it is a source of inspiration and renewal. For others, it is the basis of economic survival. In spite of differing perspectives, people share a conviction that Long Island Sound is worthy of preservation, restoration, and protection.

That conviction was reflected in a pledge signed on March 28, 1988 by elected officials and representatives of the US Environmental Protection Agency, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as part of the formal designation ceremony of Long Island Sound into the National Estuary Program. The pledge declared that:

- Long Island Sound is an important natural resource that provides incomparable beauty and significant recreational and commercial benefits;
- The Sound's living resources, water quality, and aesthetic character have suffered from rapid development and other human uses; and
- Restoration and protection of the Sound's environmental quality requires focused management by a partnership of federal, state and local governments, industry, academia, and the public.
- We therefore pledge to support the goals of the Long Island Sound Management Conference and we commit to restore and protect the environmental quality of Long Island Sound through the implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan.
- Since that time, countless hours have been spent by concerned citizens, environmental managers, government officials, and research scientists on understanding the Sound and developing the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan to serve as a blueprint for its restoration and conservation.

The Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan identifies six problems that merit special attention: (1) low dissolved oxygen (hypoxia), (2) toxic contamination, (3) pathogen contamination, (4) floatable debris, (5) the impact of these water quality problems, and habitat degradation and loss, on the health of living resources, and (6) land use and development resulting in habitat loss and degradation of water quality. The plan integrates the solutions to the priority problems through specific commitments and recommendations for actions that will improve water quality, protect habitat and living resources, educate and involve the public, improve the long-term understanding of how to manage the Sound, monitor progress, and direct management efforts. The fate of Long Island Sound and its ability to provide a wide range of benefits to the people of Connecticut, New York, and the nation depends upon our being able to act in accordance with the plan.

Representing the federal government and the states of Connecticut and New York, we recognize that protecting and restoring the Sound requires that it be managed as an integrated ecosystem, defined by the watershed and waters that surround it, not the political boundaries that divide it.

We further recognize that Long Island Sound provides enormous social and economic value to the region and that investments made to protect and restore it can improve the quality of life of people in the region and benefit the economy as well. Now, with completion of the management plan, we are at an important turning point in our efforts.

Therefore, we agree, this day of September 26, 1994, to:

- Adopt the Long Island Sound Study's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan and reaffirm our pledge to restore and protect the environmental quality of Long Island Sound through its implementation.
- Aggressively act to fulfill the plan's commitments for action as scheduled and to seek, propose, and advocate new systems for accomplishing the plan's goals and for financing to assure adequate long-term funding.
- Reconvene the Long Island Sound Study Management Conference as the focus of intergovernmental cooperation to oversee and coordinate implementation of the plan.
- Continue to promote involvement of the public in the protection of the Sound and its resources.
- Expand the efforts of the Long Island Sound Office to provide support to the Management Conference.
- Review and report on the state of the Sound and progress on implementation every year, with an emphasis on developing additional commitments to enhance and redirect management efforts.

(The agreement was signed by Connecticut Lieutenant Governor Eunice S. Groark, New York Governor Mario M. Cuomo, and Carol M. Browner, Administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency.)