

# 1996 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 the differing perspectives, people share a conviction that Long Island Sound is worthy of preservation, restoration, and protection.

That conviction was reflected by formal designation of Long Island Sound as an Estuary of National Significance in 1988 under the National Estuary Program. Through that designation, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation were convened in a Management Conference, charged with developing a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for protecting and improving the health of Long Island Sound while ensuring compatible human uses within the Sound ecosystem.

The Long Island Sound Agreement signed on September 26, 1994 committed the EPA, Connecticut, and New York to work together to implement the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Long Island Sound. The plan serves as a blueprint for restoration and conservation of this important regional resource.

The Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan identifies six problems affecting Long Island Sound that merits 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 of the health on the health of living resources; and 6) land use and development resulting in habitat loss and degradation of water quality. The plan identifies nitrogen loading as the key to water quality and sets a three phase course of action for nitrogen reduction. The plan includes additional specific commitments and recommendations for actions that will improve water quality, protect and restore habitat and living resources, educate and involve the public, and improve long-term understanding of how to manage the Sound.

To date, much progress has been made towards meeting the commitments of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. Phase I was marked by a “No Net Increase” of nitrogen loading to Long Island Sound. Phase II witnessed actual reductions of nitrogen to the Sound. Today, October 31, 1996, we dedicate ourselves to vigorously pursuing Phase III nitrogen reductions to which we committed though the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, and further agree to:

- Bring specific nitrogen reduction targets to the public for review and approval;
- Effectuate targeted nitrogen reductions as expeditiously as possible;
- Aggressively act to fulfill the commitments for action set forth in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Long Island Sound.

*Wherefore, we affirm our pledge to restore and protect the environmental quality of Long Island Sound.*

(The agreement was signed by Connecticut Governor John G. Rowland, New York Governor George E. Pataki, John DeVillars, the Region 1 Administrator of the US EPA, and Jeanne Fox, the Region 2 Administrator of the US EPA.)