



Save the Sound®

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 2, 2019

Contact:

Laura McMillan – 540-292-8429 (c)

Martin Hain – 415-225-8767 (c)

Save the Sound & Sound School students lobby Capitol Hill for a healthy Long Island Sound

New Haven, Conn. – Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound and students from the New Haven-based Sound School are meeting in Washington, D.C, with senators and congressional representatives from around Long Island Sound.

“These kids are on the Sound every day. They see both the challenges that developed shorelines like New Haven Harbor’s faces, and the promise of innovative aquaculture, pollution-busting technology, and living shorelines,” **said Curt Johnson, president of CFE/Save the Sound.** “Save the Sound is grateful to our hardworking senators and congressmen who are taking their message to heart, and to residents of all ages who step up to protect the Sound, rivers, and wildlife we all love and rely on. Together we can turbo-charge federal funding and programs to make all Long Island Sound’s water safe for swimming and fishing and restore its shoreline habitats to vibrant life.”

Congressman Rosa DeLauro, in whose district the Sound School is based, said “I could not be more proud of the Sound School students for their sustained efforts to keep the Long Island Sound clean and safe. They are magnificent stewards of this natural resource, and their commitment is vital to ensuring Congress knows how important the Sound is to our local communities and economies. Conservation and stewardship programs are among the most important ones I fight for every year as a member of the Appropriations Committee and as Co-Chair of the Long Island Sound Caucus. That is why I will continue the fight to provide robust funding in this year’s spending bills to protect the Sound.”

Sound School students Rachael Dylan Harris and Leif Dykstra and teacher Phillip Brencher brought 36 letters from students at the regional aquaculture science magnet school to present to the Connecticut and New York congressional delegations.

In his letter, Dykstra said, “Long Island Sound is a centerpiece of our education, but without protection from pollution it would lose its beauty and more and more of it would become unusable. So, I ask you our representative to help us in keeping the Sound clean and to help us restore it to its full potential.”

“You need to understand,” **wrote fellow student David Walstedter,** “that this is not only my livelihood at stake, but my friends, family, neighbors, and every citizen living around the coasts of Connecticut.”

Caleb Crumlish wrote, “Politicians and companies who want to go back to the ‘good old days’ when they could dump without care and profit are trying to zero out the entire budget for the restoration programs in the Sound, just like they tried to do last year. It was letters like this one that helped prevent that last year—and so we write to you once again.”

The group is meeting with Congressman Tom Suozzi (D, NY-3), and legislative staff for Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Kirstin Gillibrand (D-NY), and Chris Murphy (D-CT), and Congressional representatives Rosa DeLauro (D, CT-3), Jahana Hayes (D, CT-5) and Lee Zeldin (R, NY-1). DeLauro, Suozzi, and Zeldin chair the Congressional Long Island Sound Caucus.

Save the Sound and other regional advocates are seeking \$24.6 million for Long Island Sound under the National Estuary Program (Long Island Sound Study) in Fiscal Year 2020. The Fiscal Year 2019 federal budget package included \$14 million. According to a 2015 analysis, fishing, shipping, tourism, and other Long Island Sound industries generate an estimated \$31 billion in economic benefits for the region every year.

Jon Bassett, a member of the Sound School Class of 2021, wrote, “Our school shore cleanups and other small organizations’ efforts to keep the water clean are not enough.”

“I please ask you to continue the funding for the Long Island Sound Study so that we can continue our improvements to our waters because it would be foolish to backtrack,” **wrote Jasmine Thorpe**.

###

Some student comments have been lightly edited. The full package of original letters is available by request.

Additional background on the budget asks of Save the Sound and its partners on the Long Island Sound Study’s Citizens Advisory Committee is also available.