

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HJ-53

RESOLUTION PROPOSING THE ADOPTION OF THE LONG ISLAND SOUND

Title: BLUE PLAN.

Vote Date: 2/26/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: February 10, 2021

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Joseph P. Gresko, 121st Dist.

Sen. Catherine A. Osten, 19th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Public Act 15-66 required the commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to (1) develop an inventory of Long Island Sound's uses and natural resources, and (2) develop a plan to preserve and protect the Sound. The Public Act also required the commissioner to submit the plan to the Environment Committee and requires the Environment Committee to (1) hold a public hearing on the plan forty days after the beginning of the legislative session, and (2) to submit the plan to the General Assembly for approval or disapproval forty days following a public hearing.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Commissioner Katie S. Dykes, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

Supports HJ53. Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) renews their submission of the Long Island Sound Blue Plan for the second year.

In accordance with Public Act 15-66, *An Act Concerning a Long Island Sound Resource Inventory and Blue Plan*, the Blue Plan is a marine spatial planning initiative incorporating a large amount of information based upon the ecology and human uses of Long Island Sound to support water-dependent uses and the marine environment. DEEP, in partnership with

multiple stakeholders, provides all the same information to interested parties to "evaluate and substantiate more and well-informed decisions" within the Blue Plan regulatory area.

Peter Hearn, Executive Director, Council on Environmental Quality

Supports HJ53. The Blue Plan provides a foundation for both the ecological sustainment of business, recreation and marine habitats through planning, and information sources.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Peter J. Auster, PhD, Research Professor Emeritus, University of Connecticut – Department of Marine Services

Supports HJ53. Shared personal testimony as a marine ecologist. The Blue Plan provides information as a "First Stop resource" to inform regulators and decision-makers about risk management. While the Blue Plan is not a perfect plan, it provides information to make informed decisions with a collaborative approach.

Lori Brown, Executive Director, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

Supports HJ53. Connecticut has no authority to adequately plan for multiple future uses of Long Island Sound without the Blue Plan. The Blue Plan incorporates the contribution of 2,000 individuals to develop a tool for the 50-mile area that generates billions annually for local economies.

Alicea Charamut, Executive Director, Rivers Alliance

Supports HJ53. The Long Island Blue Plan was developed, through a rigorous stakeholder and public process, to produce a resource and use inventory that will be essential in making managerial decisions for one of Connecticut's most important ecological treasures.

Samantha Dynowski, State Director, Sierra Club Connecticut

Supports HJ53. The Blue plan is a resource for the public, regulators, and developers to make good decisions about the Sound. This is a unique approach promotes discussion between project proponents and stakeholders.

Nathan Frohling, Director of External Affairs, The Nature Conservancy

Supports HJ53. There is insufficient information to support the needs of competing stakeholders in Long Island Sound. The Blue Plan creates an informational tool, based on the input from various stakeholders, to manage Long Island Sound at the local, state, and federal levels.

Robert LaFrance, Director of Policy, Audubon Connecticut

Supports HJ53. Audubon Connecticut appreciates the inclusion of "Criterion 9: Birds" and the examination of Seabird occurrence models in the Long Island Blue Plan. Audubon Connecticut encourages future versions of the Blue Plan to include additional data to improve seabird models and invites the advisory board and Environment Committee to look at the Audubon Society's "Birds & Climate Visualizer."

Bill Lucey, Soundkeeper, Connecticut Fund for the Environment / Save the Sound

Supports HJ53. The Blue Pan is a "common sense approach" for the management of Long Island Sound. This plan supports multiple uses of the Long Island Sound while protecting and restoring fish and wildlife habitats. The Blue Plan serves as a "cooperative tool" for transparency, conflict mitigation, and permit discussions for new and existing uses of Long Island Sound.

Alicia M. Mozian, Conservation Director, Town of Westport

Supports HJ53. Shared personal testimony as a municipal representative to the Blue Plan Advisory Committee. The Blue Plan represents a comprehensive effort to make the permit process easier while balancing the human uses and ecology of Long Island Sound. Testimony provides specific example of how the Blue Plan would have made the permitting process easier for commercial shell fishermen in the early 2000s.

Christine Nelson, Director, Land Use Department, Town of Old Saybrook

Supports HJ53. The Blue Plan provides guidance to coastal municipalities with a significant amount of information for facility planning, conservation, and development.

Stephen Plant, CT Cultured Oysters

Supports HJ53. The Long Island Sound Blue Plan "allowing for intelligent and proactive management" of the Sound. The Long Island Sound Blue Plan protects significant ecological areas, high use human areas and minimizes conflict between the ecology, human usage areas and new projects.

The Environment Committee received approximately 30+ written testimonies in support of HJ53, the Long Island Sound Blue Plan.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None

Reported by: Steve Smith

Date: 3/11/21