

With Israel on Appropriations Committee, Funding for Long Island Sound Programs to Increase by Over \$8.6 Million Next Year

6/7/2007 Washington, DC—On Thursday Congressman Steve Israel (D-Huntington) announced that in his first year since joining the House Appropriations Committee, the Long Island Sound office will receive \$10 million in federal funds for its stewardship and restoration programs, an increase of over \$8.646 million from last year and \$9.533 million from the President's budget request.

"Since joining the House Appropriations Committee, funding Long Island Sound programs has been one of my highest priorities," said Congressman Israel, who serves as Co-Chair of the Long Island Sound Caucus. "Today, the Appropriations Committee has passed \$10 million in funds to improve both the quality of water in the Sound and the land surrounding it."

In 2006, Israel passed the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act, which authorizes funding to identify and protect land along the Long Island Sound. In 2005, Israel helped reauthorize the Long Island Sound Restoration Act, which authorizes funds to improve the water quality of the Sound. The funding amounts for the programs authorized by each law are determined by the Appropriations Committee, to which Israel was appointed in 2007. The \$10 million was included in the Fiscal Year 2008 Interior Appropriations Act, which passed the Appropriations Committee today and must now be voted on by the entire House and reviewed in the Senate.

Since its formation 11,000 years ago, the Long Island Sound has sustained a diversity of birds, wildlife and marine organisms, including the endangered Piping Plover, while also serving as a recreational magnet for tens of thousands of Americans. Today, over 8 million people live in the Sound's watershed with 20 million people living within 50 miles of its shores. The Sound alone contributes over \$5 billion to the regional economy through sport and commercial fishing, recreation and tourism.