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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

STEVE ISRAEL

Third District, New York

August 25, 2015

Colonel Christopher J. Barron
Commander and District Engineer New England
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
696 Virginia Road
Concord, Massachusetts 01742-2751

Dear Colonel Barron,

We are writing to request an extension of the public comment period on the Draft Dredge Material Management Plan and the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Long Island Sound. While we understand that the Army Corps of Engineers has already extended the public comment period to October 5, 2015, we believe that additional time is needed for stakeholders to fully review the documents and express their concerns.

The Draft Dredge Material Management Plan (DMMP) and the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DPEIS) for the Long Island Sound (LIS) is hundreds of pages long and requires expert knowledge to fully understand the impact on our communities in New York and Connecticut. It is unreasonable to expect the public to fully review this extensive report in the short amount of time currently allotted. While we recognize that there are deadlines that must be met in order to allow for continued dredging of New York and Connecticut's waterways, it is critical that the public be provided sufficient time to have a meaningful role in this process. We have also written to New York State Department of State and Department of Environment Conservation asking that they support extending the final rule deadline to August 2016, which would allow for an extended comment period.

In addition to extending the comment period, we also ask that additional public hearings be held in either late September or October. With only ten days between the release of the DMMP and the final public hearing on August 27th, we believe additional time to review the document is needed to maximize public participation. A second round of hearings in October or late September would give the public and all interested parties the appropriate amount of time to review the plan and be prepared for meaningful public hearings.

It is in the best interest of the future of Long Island Sound to have a well-informed, meaningful discussion on the Dredge Material Management.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Steve Israel
Member of Congress



Kristen E. Gillibrand
United States Senator