

# RiverheadLOCAL

After six years, National Estuary Program reauthorized, given \$26.5 in funding to focus on local conservation projects



Long Island Sound Study and Peconic Estuary Program are among 28 estuaries that make up the National Estuary Program. *Photo: Joseph Oliver*

**After six years, National Estuary Program reauthorized, given \$26.5 in funding to focus on local conservation projects**

by [Courtney Blasl](#) May 24, 2016, 5:30 pm

A bill reauthorizing the National Estuary Program and giving it \$26.5 million in funding was signed into law by President Obama on Friday.

NEP is a non-regulatory partnership between 28 locally-based estuaries throughout the country, including the Long Island Sound Study and Peconic Estuary Program.

The funds will be used for water quality and wetlands restoration, as well as other local conservation projects to restore beaches and protect wildlife, according to a press release issued by Congressman Lee Zeldin.

The bill also ensures that funding will be prioritized to address urgent and challenging issues that threaten the ecological and economic well-being of coastal areas. These issues include the increase in nitrogen and harmful algae blooms that have been plaguing local waters in recent years.

“Over the years, water quality on Long Island has suffered severely from issues such as pollution, overdevelopment and the dumping of dredged materials,” said Zeldin. “This new law, which I was proud to support in the House, would ensure that Long Island’s estuaries receive the funding needed to improve and protect our waterways.”

“The Peconic Estuary Program is grateful to Congressman Zeldin for his support of this important bill,” said Peconic Estuary Program director Dr. Alison Branco. “With this renewed mandate from Congress, the Peconic Estuary Program looks forward to updating its Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan and tackling the challenges facing our estuaries today and into the future.”

NEP was first created in 1987 in the Clean Water Act. This reauthorization is the first since 2010, when the program expired. The bill signed into law on Friday funds the program for the next 15 years.