



STEVEN ENGLEBRIGHT  
4<sup>th</sup> Assembly District  
Suffolk County

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

CHAIRMAN  
Committee on Environmental Conservation

COMMITTEES  
Education  
Energy  
Higher Education  
Rules

COMMISSIONS  
Science and Technology  
Water Resource Needs of Long Island

MEMBER  
Bi-State L.I. Sound Marine Resource Committee  
N.Y.S. Biodiversity Research Institute  
N.Y.S. Heritage Area Advisory Council

June 16, 2015

Senator Charles Schumer  
322 Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Schumer,

We write to express our collective opposition to the sale of Plum Island, situated off Long Island's North Fork.

Plum Island is an 843-acre island located in the Township of Southold and is the site of the U.S. Government's Plum Island Animal Disease Control Laboratory. Research is conducted there on contagious animal diseases, originally under the aegis of the Department of Agriculture but since 2003 under the supervision of the Department of Homeland Security.

The developed portion of Plum Island consists of the laboratory research facilities which encompass approximately 10-15% of the Island, entirely in its northwestern corner, where the Plum Island Lighthouse, a National Historic Landmark, also is located, and the center part of the Island where the barracks building complex remains of Fort Terry, a fortification built for the Spanish-American War, with twelve batteries scattered throughout the Island.

The remaining 85% of Plum Island contains nationally-significant natural, cultural, historic, and scenic features and resources. The fields, forests, wetlands, and shoreline habitats of Plum Island provide essential habitat to migratory songbirds, waterbirds, and birds-of-prey, including the presence of an active bank swallow colony and eight active osprey nests. More particularly, as of March 2015, 218 migratory, overwinter, breeding, and resident bird species have been observed on Plum Island and in surrounding waters, including the federally endangered roseate tern and federally threatened piping plover. Plum Island contains the largest winter haul out

site for marine pinnipeds in southern New England, typically involving several hundred harbor and grey seals that utilize the rocky coastline of the Island's east end for this purpose.

Significant natural communities and plant species are also found on Plum Island, including an extensive wooded freshwater wetland in the southwestern section of the Island and a maritime dune community, a NY State Natural Heritage Program ranked community which collectively provide habitat for a number of rare and endangered plant species.

With Plum Island's existing network of trails and roads and extensively undeveloped character and remoteness and location off the North Fork at the point where the Peconic Estuary, Long Island Sound, and Atlantic Ocean meet, the Island provides unparalleled opportunities for passive recreational activities such as bird watching, hiking and viewing the scenic landscapes of the East End.

Despite the remarkable nature, cultural and recreational values elaborated above, Congress, in 2008, approved and the President signed P.L. 110-329, part of the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance and Continuing Appropriations Act, a provision of which (Section 540) authorized the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to "liquidate the Plum Island asset" if he determines the National Bio and Agro-defense facility (NBAF) be located at a site other than Plum Island". The federal Department of Homeland Security Secretary has made the requisite determination, thus initiating the process of disposal of this publicly-owned Island.

The rationale for disposing of Plum Island is to use proceeds from the sale of the Island, after decommissioning costs, to help reduce the costs of site acquisition and construction of the new proposed NBAF facility proposed to be sited in Manhattan, Kansas. The basis of this rationale has been largely negated by high anticipated decommissioning costs and by the actions of the Town of Southold which, in 2013, rezoned the property for research and conservation purposes and not for residential, commercial, or industrial development, thereby significantly reducing its market value.

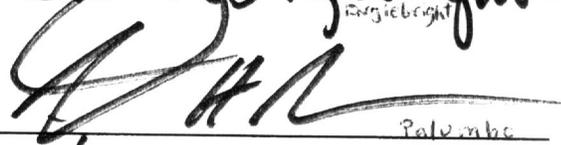
Moreover, the disposition of Plum Island runs counter to many past dispositions of federal property which led to the creation of several National Wildlife Refuges in proximity to Plum Island including Nomans Island National Wildlife Refuge in coastal Massachusetts and Ninigret, Sachuest Point, and Block Island National Wildlife Refuges in coastal Rhode Island. Additionally, disposition of Plum Island is incongruous with the three decades long effort by state and local government on Long Island to acquire parkland possessing ecological, environmental, cultural, historic, recreational, and scenic value.

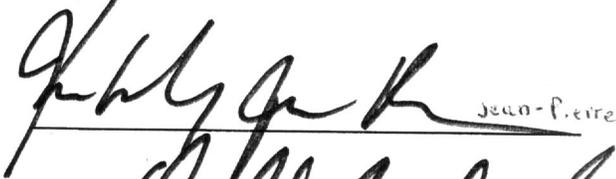
In recognition of the environmental, cultural, historic, recreational, and scenic values possessed by Plum Island, the undersigned members of the New York State Legislature strongly opposed the sale of Plum Island and wish to convey our support for transferring the undeveloped portions of Plum Island to the National Wildlife Refuge system and dedicating it as the "Plum Island National Wildlife Refuge", or in the event the Plum Island Animal Disease Control Facility is permanently closed and the buildings and associated infrastructure are not adaptively re-used, the entire Island be so dedicated as a National Wildlife Refuge.

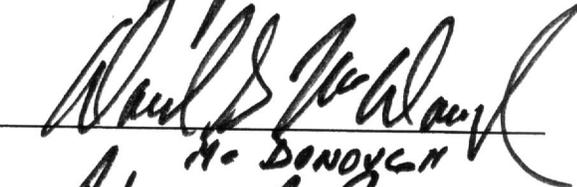
Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

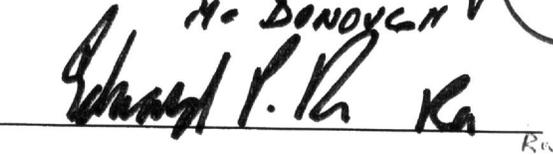
Steve Englebright, Chairman  
NYS Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee

  
Englebright

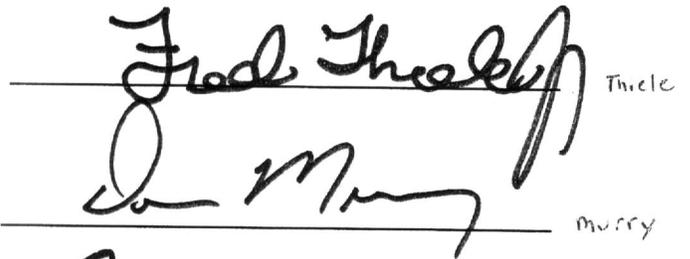
  
Palumbo

  
Jean-Pierre

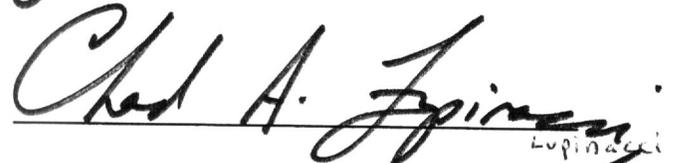
  
No. DONOVAN

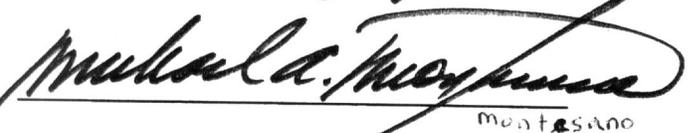
  
Ra

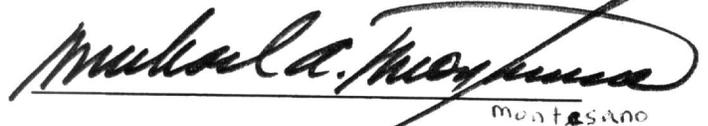
  
Schmit

  
Theobald

  
Murray

  
Rain

  
Lupinacci

  
Montasano

  
Lavinia

Michael J. Fitzpatrick  
Fitzpatrick

Evelene Hooper  
Hooper

Philip Rames  
Rames

Tom McKevitt  
McKevitt

Joseph Saladino  
Saladino

Michael Solages  
Solages

Alan Curran  
Curran

Todd Kaminsky  
Kaminsky

Alfred E. Graf  
Alfred E. Graf

Barbara  
Barbara

cc: The Honorable Barack H. Obama, President of the United States  
Jeh Johnson, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security  
Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior  
Denise Turner Roth, Administrator of the General Services Administration  
The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand, U.S. Senator  
Member of New York State's Congressional Delegation:  
The Honorable Lee Zelden, Congressman, 1<sup>st</sup> District  
The Honorable Peter King, Congressman, 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
The Honorable Steve Israel, Congressman, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
The Honorable Kathleen Rice, Congresswoman, 4<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Gregory Meeks, Congressman, 5<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Grace Meng, Congresswoman, 6<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Nydia Velázquez, Congresswoman, 7<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, Congressman, 8<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Yvette Clarke, Congresswoman, 9<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Jerrold Nadler, Congressman, 10<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Daniel Donovan Jr., Congressman, 11<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Carolyn Maloney, Congresswoman, 12<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Charles Rangel, Congressman, 13<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Joseph Crowley, Congressman, 14<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable José Serrano, Congressman, 15<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Eliot Engel, Congressman, 16<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Nita Lowey, Congresswoman, 17<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Sean Maloney, Congressman, 18<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Christopher Gibson, Congressman, 19<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Paul Tonko, Congressman, 20<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Elise Stefanik, Congresswoman, 21<sup>st</sup> District  
The Honorable Richard Hanna, Congressman, 22<sup>nd</sup> District  
The Honorable Tom Reed II, Congressman, 23<sup>rd</sup> District  
The Honorable John Katko, Congressman, 24<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Louise Slaughter, Congresswoman, 25<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Brian Higgins, Congressman, 26<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Chris Collins, Congressman, 27<sup>th</sup> District