

East End Supervisors and Mayors Association
PO Box 970, 38 N. Ferry Road, Shelter Island, NY 11964
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Supervisors:

James D. Dougherty, Chair
Town of Shelter Island

April 26, 2017

Larry Cantwell
Town of East Hampton

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate

Scott A. Russell
Town of Southold

322 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Jay Schneiderman
Town of Southampton

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate

Sean M. Walter
Town of Riverhead

478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Mayors:

Peter Sartorius, Vice-Chair
Village of Quogue

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
United States House of Representatives
1517 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Mark Epley
Village of Southampton

Dear Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and Congressman Zeldin:

Sandra Schroeder
Village of Sag Harbor

I am writing on behalf of the East End Supervisors and Mayors Association to urge you to protect Plum Island, in the Town of Southold, New York, from sale by the General Services Administration and Department of Homeland Security. As you know, the Plum Island Animal Disease Center is scheduled to move its operations to the new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility in Manhattan, Kansas, when the new facility is ready, sometime between 2020 and 2022. We believe that when the PIADC activities cease, the existing laboratory and supporting infrastructure contained on 20% of Plum Island's land area would be well suited for another type of research serving the public interest and that the remainder of the island, zoned by the Town of Southold as a Conservation District, would be ideally suited as a wildlife refuge, preferably under the auspices of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Timothy Hogue
Village of Dering Harbor

Donald Louchheim
Village of Sagaponack

Jeff Sander
Village of North Haven

George Hubbard
Village of Greenport

Paul F. Rickenbach, Jr.
Village of East Hampton

Maria Z. Moore
Village of Westhampton Beach

We know there is tremendous public support for protecting the remarkable natural resources hosted by Plum Island as well as for retaining jobs there. We wish to see future proposals for the Island's use comport with the Town of Southold's 2013 Plum Island zoning districts, which were prudently prepared for the long-term protection and support of all the best that Plum Island has to offer – high-value wildlife habitat and ecosystem services, coupled with a campus that would be perfect for attracting good jobs.

Gary A. Vegliante
Village of West Hampton Dunes

When we consider Plum Island's rich history and cultural significance as well as the many important habitats and species there, we must agree with the words of Ruth Ann Bramson, one of the authors of *A World Unto Itself – the Remarkable History of Plum Island, New York*,ⁱ who said last summer that "the story of Plum Island is America's story in miniature," and that "[t]his island is owned by Americans, and it should stay that way."ⁱⁱ

We strenuously urge that the Federal Government move this year to protect Plum Island's rich resources and hold them in the public domain, supporting new uses for the research facilities and preserving 80% of the Island as a National Wildlife Refuge or its equivalent.

Sincerely,



James Dougherty
Supervisor, Town of Shelter Island
Chairman, East End Supervisors and Mayors Association

ⁱ Bramson, Ruth Ann, Geoffrey K. Fleming, and Amy Kasuga Folk (2014). *A World Unto Itself: The Remarkable History of Plum Island*, New York. Southold Historical Society, Southold, NY. 388 pp.

ⁱⁱ Young, Beth (2015). Environmentalists File Federal Lawsuit Over Proposed Plum Island Sale. *East End Beacon*, July 8, 2016. <http://www.eastendbeacon.com/2016/07/08/environmentalists-file-lawsuit-over-plum-island-sale/>