



June 14, 2017

The Honorable John Boozman

Chairman

Subcommittee on Homeland Security

U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee

131 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Boozman:

As spokesperson for the Preserve Plum Island Coalition (PPIC), an 80-member organization dedicated to preserving the resources and features of Plum Island, NY, I am writing to express the Coalition's strong support for the May 30, 2017 letter written to you by Senators Richard Blumenthal, Chris Murphy, and Kirsten Gillibrand regarding the future of Plum Island. They have written to request your support for including language, in the Appropriations bill currently under development, which repeals Section 540 of title V of division D of the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009 (P.L. 110-329) and section 538 of title V of division D of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-74).

Plum Island is a remarkable ecological, historic, and cultural gem situated off the tip of Long Island's North Fork. Plum Island Lighthouse, a National Historic Landmark is situated on the island's western edge. Similarly, Fort Terry, a feature under consideration for National Landmark status and constructed during the Spanish-American War exists in the center and eastern portions of the island. The largest "haul-out" site for seals in southern New England is situated on the eastern tip with several hundred seals typically overwintering each year. Two hundred and nineteen bird species have been documented on Plum Island, including the federally endangered roseate tern and federally threatened piping plover. Eighteen rare plant species grow here too; for a few Plum Island is the only site in New York where they grow. Given these collective features we believe the island should not be sold but kept in the public domain. Halting the sale would give decision-makers the opportunity to develop appropriate long-term strategies to safeguard the resources of Plum Island for the benefit of the public and future generations.

Broad support exists for the preservation of Plum Island. Congressman Lee Zeldin (R, NY-1) has introduced multi-sponsored legislation to halt the sale of the island and the several dozen members of the Long Island delegation to the New York State Senate and Assembly have expressed their collective support for its protection. Furthermore, the entire Suffolk County Legislature as well as the East End Supervisors Association are on record in support, including the Town of Southold, the town in which the island is located. Through the Coalition, dozens of organizations, businesses, and key individuals support the goal of safeguarding the island for the benefit of the public, including access to the historic areas. Lastly, many local and regional media outlets have opined in support of keeping the island public and preserving its significant resources.

We most respectfully hope that you will take steps to protect the resources of this precious island by incorporating the language requested by the Senators in the Appropriations bill currently under development.

PPIC thanks you for your consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,

John L. Turner

Spokesperson

Preserve Plum Island Coalition