



Congressman Tim Bishop

FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK

NEWS RELEASE

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BISHOP, CLINTON REQUEST PLUM ISLAND MEETING WITH RIDGE

Letter is Follow-up to Town Hall Meeting

Washington—Following up on a February 9 Town Hall Meeting where over 600 North Fork residents expressed their concerns about the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, Congressman Tim Bishop (D-Southampton) and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) today sent a letter to Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge asking for a meeting. In the letter, Bishop also informed Ridge he would be facilitating a meeting of first responders and Plum Island staff to develop emergency response plans.

Plum Island is scheduled to be transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Homeland Security on June 1. There were no representatives from Homeland Security at the Town Hall, which was held at Mattituck High School.

“Having heard the loud voice of the community which is so concerned about Plum Island, I want to sit across the table from Secretary Ridge and let him know that we cannot wait until June to begin to address important safety issues,” Bishop said. “Senator Clinton and I made a promise to bring the community’s concerns to the highest levels, and we will keep that promise.”

At the meeting, several first responders eloquently raised concerns about their ability to respond to an emergency at Plum Island. There has been a dangerous lack of information about conditions on Plum Island to local fire departments, which could endanger the lives of local firefighters in an emergency. One of Bishop’s top priorities is to facilitate communications between first responders and Plum Island staff to develop an emergency response plan.

“First responders who put their lives on the line by volunteering to rush into dangerous situations deserve all the facts so they can put together the best, safest plan,” Bishop said. “It is unacceptable to me that Plum Island first responders have not been given information that could literally mean the difference between life and death.”

The letter also informed Ridge about the numerous safety problems that have resulted as the result of contractor LB&B’s refusal to negotiate with workers who have been on strike for over six months.

A copy of the letter follows.

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