



# Congressman Tim Bishop

*FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK*

## NEWS RELEASE

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## **BISHOP ANNOUNCES \$1 MILLION TO PROTECT PECONIC ESTUARY**

### **Receives Award from Nature Conservancy for Environmental Efforts**

**RIVERHEAD, NY--** With the gleaming Peconic Estuary as his backdrop, Congressman Tim Bishop announced \$1 million in new funding to protect that important body of water. Bishop had successfully fought to secure the funds in the federal Transportation Bill. He made the announcement at the Indian Island Golf Course in Riverhead.

The funding will help eliminate harmful road runoff from entering the Peconic Estuary by installing storm water control devices on roadways throughout the Peconic Estuary Watershed. Pathogens and other toxic substances are a major contributing factor to shellfish degradation, and by decreasing the amount of pollution introduced into the Peconic Estuary, the overall environmental health of Long Island will be improved. This will simultaneously improve the shellfish industry as well.

"This funding will decrease pollution into the Peconic Estuary," Bishop said. "Not only the health of our families, but the health of our area's economy, is tied to the health of our water. I am also pleased that conservation groups as well as officials on all levels of government are doing all we can to protect the Peconic Estuary."

Bishop was joined for the announcement by Assemblyman Marc Alessi; Becky McGrory representing Assemblyman Fred Thiele; Kevin McDonald, Director of Public Lands, The Nature Conservancy; Kevin McAllister, Peconic Baykeeper; Bob DeLuca, President, Group for the South Fork, and Suffolk County officials, including Vito Manei, Director, Suffolk County Peconic Estuary Program Office and Martin Trent, Chief, Suffolk County Office of Ecology.

"I am working on the State level to make sure that the Peconic Estuary has the kind of protection and support it deserves," Alessi said. "It is good news that Congressman Bishop is providing this kind of support from the federal government and I am pleased to be a partner in this effort."

"Although Congressman Bishop makes it sound easy, we know how tough it is to find \$1 million in the federal budget to protect the Peconic," McDonald said. The Nature Conservancy also presented Bishop with an award in appreciation for his strong support of the Peconic Estuary and protection of clean water. "We appreciate that we have a strong ally in Congressman Bishop."

"The timing of this award is excellent," stated Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy. "The

Peconic Estuary Program has completed regional stormwater planning and is now developing detailed plans for subwatersheds. These plans will lead to specific recommendations to mitigate stormwater runoff at various locations, and the federal funding will provide for implementation. This is an excellent example of levels of government working together as this grant builds on the County's \$1.8 million from the Water Quality Improvement and Restoration Program to implement the Phase II stormwater program. We are fortunate that Congressman Bishop continues to be a leader in providing funds to implement Peconic Estuary Program."

The Peconic Estuary is one of 28 nationally significant and federally protected estuaries in the country, and is managed by local, county, state and national officials. In November 2001 then EPA Secretary Christine Todd Whitman, and Governor George Pataki, signed off on the Peconic Estuary's Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP), which included a road runoff mitigation initiative.

In a 1993 Nature Conservancy study, more than 1,100 establishments were identified as "estuarine dependent" and gross revenues for these establishments exceeded \$450 million per year. More than 7,300 people are employed in these businesses, with a combined annual income of more than \$127 million, demonstrating the need to protect this vital natural resource. It is likely that these numbers have increased since then.

This is not the first funding Bishop has delivered for the Peconic Estuary. In Fiscal Year 2004, Bishop secured a \$100,000 federal grant to help implement the Management Plan.

PHOTO-- In a press conference on Monday, Congressman Tim Bishop announces \$1 million to protect the Peconic Estuary. L to R-- Assemblyman Marc Alessi; Congressman Bishop; Kevin McDonald, Director of Public Lands, The Nature Conservancy; Becky McGrory representing Assemblyman Fred Thiele; Martin Trent, Chief, Suffolk County Office of Ecology; and Kevin McAllister, Peconic Baykeeper.

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