

CT Post

Plum Island may be saved from developers

By Bill Cummings

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Environmental groups are hailing federal plans to study long term uses for Plum Island in Long Island Sound that could lead to preserving the 840-acre property instead of selling it to a developer.

“This action demonstrates that the ‘Save Plum Island’ mantra offered by thousands of citizens is being heard loud and clear, from the tip of Long Island to the halls of Congress,” said [Leah Schmalz](#), program director for Save the Sound.

The [Congressional Appropriations](#) subcommittee on [Homeland Security](#) last week directed the [Department of Homeland Security](#) to work with the Environmental Protection Agency, the [Department of the Interior](#) and the [General Services Administration](#) on a study of options for long-term use of the island.

The agencies were directed to consider environmental and historic resources, among other factors, in analyzing conservation options. It’s also required that the agency identify any needed legislative changes, costs, and revenues to accomplish that goal. “This study is a strong step toward saving a precious, irreplaceable national treasure from developers and polluters,” said U.S Sen. [Richard Blumenthal](#), D-Conn.

“It will provide the science and fact based evidence to make our case for stopping the current Congressional plan to sell Plum Island to the highest bidder,” Blumenthal said. “The stark truth is the sale of Plum Island is no longer necessary to build a new bioresearch facility because Congress has fully appropriated the funds. There is now no need for this sale — and in fact Congress needs to rescind the sale.”

Plum Island, located roughly across from Old Saybrook in New York State water, has long been home to a restricted federal animal disease research facility. The federal government has been preparing to close the facility and sell the island since 2009.