



Connecticut Fund
for the Environment

Save the Sound®

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Change in Leadership at CFE/Save the Sound

New Haven, Conn. – After 25 years of leadership, Donald S. Strait will step down as president and CEO of Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound on October 1. He hands the reins to Curtis P. Johnson, currently CFE/Save the Sound's executive director.

Don Strait first joined CFE in 1990, and has held the organization's top staff leadership position since 1992. In addition, he co-founded the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, has served on the board of directors of Restore America's Estuaries, the Environmental Support Center, and the State Environmental Leadership Program, and currently sits on the Governor's Council for Climate Change. Under his direction, the organization has quintupled in size and dramatically expanded both its service area and arenas of expertise. He will remain involved with CFE/Save the Sound as a consultant.

"Leading CFE/Save the Sound through such a period of change in our region, and having the trust and support of our members to steward this organization, has been one of the great honors of my life," **Strait said**. "I am grateful to be able to hand the reins to Curt, who has been a partner in virtually every major effort at CFE/Save the Sound since he joined us 24 years ago. It will be exciting to see what Curt does in this new role with the benefit of all his expertise, passion for connecting with people, and decades of experience. I look forward to continuing to work with CFE/Save the Sound to help advance our mission wherever it takes us next."

Curt Johnson joined Connecticut Fund for the Environment in 1993 to lead the organization's legal team. He has since served as program director, executive director of the Save the Sound program, and most recently in an executive director position overseeing CFE/Save the Sound's land and water, legal, communications, and membership initiatives.

Johnson holds a J.D. from University of Connecticut School of Law, where he co-founded the Environmental Law Clinic, and a Masters in the Study of Law from Vermont Law School. Prior to joining CFE he was an attorney with the firm of Murtha, Cullina, Richter and Pinney. He has served as the Connecticut Co-Chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee to Long Island Sound's National Estuary Program and as President of the Hamden Land Conservation Trust.

"The base of CFE/Save the Sound strength has always been our volunteers and members, but it's Don's leadership that has mobilized that power and directed it to advancing our mission," **said Johnson**. "Don saw that by adding engineering, policy-making, water quality science, and grassroots organizing to our original focus on environmental law, and expanding to serve the entire Long Island Sound region, we could do so much more to protect public health and the places we all love. I'm humbled to have been chosen by our board to continue that work."

Connecticut Fund for the Environment was founded in 1978 and Save the Sound was founded in 1972. The organizations merged in 2004, joining CFE's legal and lobbying expertise with Save the Sound's grassroots engagement and restoration know-how. The organization has recently joined forces with Soundkeeper, Inc. to return a full-time Soundkeeper watchdog to the water, with the long-term goal of merging Soundkeeper into CFE/Save the Sound.

The organization's president is supervised by an 18-person board of directors and is advised and supported at the staff level by a management team of department heads.

Leslie Lee, chair of CFE/Save the Sound's board, said, "From the Kelda water company victory and stopping the proposed Broadwater natural gas facility in Long Island Sound to today's vigorous work to protect Plum Island, Don has led us with energy, a sound sense of strategy, and a clear vision of our purpose. Today, we all face new challenges to protecting our environment. I think our members and partners will find Curt's ideas for the future not only reassuring—as CFE/Save the Sound continues the excellence of its work—but also inspiring. Together we'll focus on improving the health and water quality of Long Island Sound, increasing renewable energy and reducing the impacts of climate change, and protecting significant open spaces throughout our region."

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The mission of Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound is to protect and improve the land, air, and water of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. From offices in New Haven, Conn., and Mamaroneck, NY, we use legal and scientific expertise and bring citizens together to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations. Learn more at www.ctenvironment.org.