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### NYSDEC REGION 1 (LONG ISLAND) PROFILE INFORMATION

DEC Region 1 is comprised of Nassau and Suffolk counties. With a population of 2.8 million, the region is the most populated DEC region outside of New York City, and has historically managed the highest volume of permit applications in the state. Of the approximately 4,000 permit applications processed each year during periods of normal economic activity, nearly 75 percent of those applications typically involve Tidal Wetlands and Protection of Waters permits, a telling statistic which underscores the fact that the region is an island and surrounded by water. The region features unique and diverse demographics, as the Nassau County portion is fully developed and directly abuts New York City, sharing many development characteristics, while Suffolk County is well developed in its western half and still rural on the east end. Nassau and western Suffolk evolved from dependence on an agricultural prior to World War II, to reliance on the defense industry through the 1980s, and has since evolved into a high tech economy reliant on companies like Computer Associates and Symbol Technologies. Eastern Suffolk still has roughly 30,000 acres in agricultural production, and is the largest producing county in New York State in terms of the value of crops produced, although the industry has shifted away from reliance solely on food crops to ornamentals, turf, and grape crops which support the Long Island wine industry. Eastern Long Island relies on its rural character in large part to support a robust tourism economy valued at \$2 billion per year.

### UNIQUE NATURAL RESOURCE FEATURES

In addition to its island status, the region contains a number of unique environmental features which have resulted in special protections that have economic implications for both government agencies and the private sector. Drinking water is supplied exclusively from the island's sole source aquifer, and the region is home to two estuaries of national significance (Long Island Sound and the Peconic Estuary), and a state-designated estuary (South Shore Estuary Reserve). The region also includes the State's third largest Forest Preserve, the Central Pine Barrens. The Preserve totals roughly 100,000 acres, comprised of a 52,500 Core Preservation Area which is essentially off-limits to new development, and a Compatible Growth Area of approximately 47,500 acres, where new development must conform to standards set forth in a Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The shorelines of the region are dynamic environments subject to erosion damage and flooding during storm events, a fact that will make it more vulnerable to impacts associated with sea level rise.

### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

The region's miles of coastline, marine environments and rural character are significant assets which have positive economic implications for the region. Eastern Long Island's popularity as a vacation destination, which generates significant sales tax revenues, is tied in large part to its rural character. The agricultural, tourism, and commercial and recreational fishing industries have been positive contributors to the regional economy, even as industrial and service sectors of the economy have evolved from defense to technology-based companies. Research institutions including Brookhaven National Laboratory and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, and academic institutions like Stony Brook University, have become increasingly important anchors to the regional economy during this evolution.

Significant financial liabilities arise from legacy impacts resulting from contamination at sites used for industrial production during the period when the regional economy was powered by the defense industry. Site investigations and remedial activities continue at dozens of sites throughout the region, decades after the downsizing of the defense industry, some of which involve the federal government.

Impacts to public water supply wells and efforts by water utilities to obtain compensation continue to be a source of controversy as local officials press congressional representatives for assistance in this regard. As a result of land use patterns, the region is also home to hundreds of current and former gasoline stations, and receives more than 2,000 new petroleum spill reports each year. There are currently xxxx active spill sites in the region.

#### MAJOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

**HEARTLAND TOWN SQUARE** (Town of Islip, Suffolk County): proposed redevelopment of 452-acres formerly part of Pilgrim Psychiatric Center into a high-density pre-planned, community including a Town Center (commercial), office and residential components. For a project of its size and density, natural resource and groundwater issues are relatively minor. Town of Islip is Lead Agency and has indicated that approvals may allow phased implementation. DEC is an involved agency, but has no applications before it as of yet.

**NASSAU HUB REDEVELOPMENT** (Town of Hempstead, Nassau County): plans to redevelop the area around the Nassau Coliseum have stalled in the wake of a change of County administration. The Lighthouse Project was introduced by New York Islanders owner, Charles Wang, and included a newly renovated Coliseum for the Islanders, surrounded by houses, hotels, offices, restaurants, and various stores, an athletic complex, conference and exhibition facilities, and a minor league baseball ballpark. DEC and other state agencies had been actively involved in reviewing the project after then-Governor Paterson expressed support. In February 2009, local media speculated that Charles Wang, frustrated with the slow pace of obtaining approval for the project from the Town of Hempstead, would consider relocating the team, but this has not happened. This major regional project has been stalled for a year.

**WYANDANCH RISING** (Town of Babylon, Suffolk County): DEC has been instrumental in advancing the Town's "Wyandanch Rising" revitalization project in this environmental justice community. This area with 10,000 people includes dozens of former industrial properties, and has suffered from poverty, and blight. The town has invested \$20 million to purchase properties in the area, a sum that officials hope to recover when private developers get involved. The project has been named one of three "Spotlight Communities" - models of brownfield redevelopment by New York State. DEC approved Suffolk County's request for the out-of-district connection in an accelerated process coordinated with DEC, the County and EFC in order to lock in \$15 million in low-interest financing for a sewer line officials consider the lynchpin of a planned \$500-million redevelopment.

**ENTERPRISE PARK AT CALVERTON (EPCAL)** (Town of Riverhead, Suffolk County): Since the transfer of this land to the Town of Riverhead by the U.S. Navy in the late 1990s, numerous development proposals have been advanced for this property, which totals nearly 3,000 acres. DEC Region 1 has played an important role in facilitating redevelopment efforts to date through the issuance of Freshwater Wetlands and Wild Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act (WSR) permits for an industrial subdivision (Calverton Camelot LLC), which is being actively developed, and for the rehabilitation of a rail spur that has restored rail access to the property. The site is also the subject of ongoing investigation and remediation related to legacy impacts from defense-related industrial activities and resultant contamination. Development of this site has been complicated by its location in the Pine Barrens Preserve, and the environmental sensitivity of the area, which includes extensive freshwater wetlands and is adjacent to the Peconic River.

