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(New York, N.Y.) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation today announced that a 760 square-mile area of Long Island Sound is now a “no discharge zone,” which means that boats are completely banned from discharging sewage into the water. EPA reviewed DEC’s proposal to establish a no discharge zone for New York areas of the Long Island Sound and determined that there are adequate facilities in the Sound for boats to pump out their sewage. Boaters must now dispose of their sewage at these specially-designated pump-out stations. This action is part of a joint EPA and New York State strategy to eliminate the discharge of sewage from boats into the state’s waterways. Discharges of sewage from boats can contain harmful levels of pathogens and chemicals such as formaldehyde, phenols and chlorine, which have a negative impact on water quality, pose a risk to people’s health and impair marine life. EPA reviewed numerous public comments on its tentative determination for the establishment of a no discharge zone, which was proposed in April 2011.

“Clean water is one of New York’s most valuable assets, and pumping sewage from boats into local waters is a practice that is both harmful and completely unnecessary,” said EPA Regional Administrator Judith A. Enck. “Establishing a no discharge zone for the New York portions of Long Island Sound is an important step to further protect water quality and vital aquatic habitat in the Sound.”

“This addition to the list of ‘no discharge zones’ offers enhanced protections for the New York portions of Long Island Sound and closes a loop-hole exposed by boaters from neighboring states who have restrictions in place,” said DEC Commissioner Joe Martens. “We will continue to work collaboratively with EPA and other partners to protect our natural resources that are vital for our health, economy and recreation.”

To read EPA’s final determination or for more information about no discharge zones, go to <http://www.epa.gov/region02/water/ndz/index.html> [1].

The designation of a no discharge zone for New York waters of the Sound will create one comprehensive policy for discharges to the Sound. Connecticut, which has jurisdiction for half of Long Island Sound, had previously designated its portion of the waters as a no discharge zone. Large areas of New York’s waters remained unprotected from boat discharges. Boaters could simply cross into New York waters to discharge sewage. Today’s designation puts a ban on this practice.

The no discharge zone for the Long Island Sound will include the open waters, harbors, bays and navigable tributaries of the Sound and a portion of the East River from the Hell Gate Bridge in the west to the northern bounds of Block Island Sound

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in the east. The waters of Mamaroneck Harbor, Huntington-Northport Bay Complex, Port Jefferson Complex, Hempstead Harbor and Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Complex have been previously designated as no discharge zones.

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