

**CITIZENS
CAMPAIGN**
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

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Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

November 21, 2013

RE: Comments on Draft South Shore Blueway Trail Plan

FROM: Citizens Campaign for the Environment

To whom it may concern:

Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE) is an 80,000 member, not-for-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization working for the protection of public health and the natural environment on behalf of our members in New York and Connecticut for almost 30 years. CCE works on a range of issues that include the protection of waterways and drinking water, reduction of pesticides, preservation of open space, clean-up of toxic waste, and increasing renewable energy. In addition, CCE is an active member of the Western Bays Collaborative Working Group and Chairs the South Shore Estuary Reserve (SSER) Citizens Advisory Committee. *Citizens Campaign for the Environment strongly supports the Draft South Shore Blueway Trail Plan and encourages the adoption and timely implementation of the plan.*

The South Shore Blueway Trail (SSBT) plan sets forth a vision for the structure and organization of a water trail for non-motorized boats that provides residents and visitors with an accessible, safe and enjoyable experience. A Blueway trail is a route for non-motorized boats along a waterway that combines recreation and environmental awareness while linking communities and land based attractions such as parks, historic sites and natural areas. The draft plan contains specific recommendations to expand water access, improve trail infrastructure, boating safety, community connections, and stewardship.

The Blueway Trail is located in a sub-region of the SSER, known as the Western Bays. The Western Bays are home to the largest concentration of salt marshes in the South Shore Estuary Reserve. This system of bays and marshes provides critical habitat for birds and marine species, and offer abundant recreational opportunities for residents and tourists. The South Shore Blueway Trail highlights Long Island's most important cultural and natural resource—our waterways. The proposed trail creates ecotourism destinations within the South Shore Estuary Reserve where residents and visitors can enjoy recreational, educational and scenic experiences *that promote environmental stewardship and an understanding of the importance of protecting water quality and coastal ecosystems.*

The South Shore Blueway Trail Plan works to complement and implement goals and actions within the SSER Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The SSER CMP is a blueprint for

the long-term health of the SSER's bays, tributaries, tidal wetlands, wildlife, and expansion of its water-based economy. Issues addressed in the comprehensive management plan include ***water quality, living resources, public use and enjoyment, water related economy, and education and stewardship***. Specifically, the draft plan is consistent with action 7-1 in the SSER CMP, "Expanding public access and recreation at existing sites", and action 7-2 in the SSER CMP, "Creating new public access and recreation opportunities". The SSER CMP states, "New opportunities are needed to meet the increasing demand for public access and provide a greater variety of recreational activities." The SSBT is an exciting plan that seeks to expand the water based economy, while promoting conservation and stewardship.

CCE encourages the adoption of a final South Shore Blueway Trail Plan. We also encourage the Bay Park Sewage Treatment Plant to be upgraded and the outfall pipe to be relocated to the ocean. The sewage outfall pipe should not be a Blueway destination. This critical next step will seek to restore the struggling bays in the area, while encouraging more recreational opportunities throughout the Blueway.

We look forward to working with the Blueway committee in implementing the plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Adrienne Esposito".

Adrienne Esposito
Executive Director