

Murphy, Lieberman, Blumenthal, Larson Announce New Bill to Protect Farmington River

SIMSBURY—Today, Senator Joe Lieberman, Senator Richard Blumenthal, Congressman John Larson, and Congressman Chris Murphy announced new legislation to create a U.S. National Park Service Wild and Scenic Rivers Act protective designation for the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook, through the ten towns of Avon, Bloomfield, Burlington, Canton, East Granby, Farmington, Granby, Hartland, Simsbury, and Windsor.

The bill is sponsored in the U.S. Senate by Lieberman and Blumenthal, and in the House of Representatives by Murphy and Larson. The lawmakers were joined at the announcement by Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Commissioner Dan Esty, state and local leaders, and river preservation advocates.

"While the faces around the movement to protect the Farmington River may change, one thing is clear: we will continue to push for the protection of the Farmington River and Salmon Brook, one of Connecticut's true natural treasures," Lieberman said. "It is part of our history, part of our heritage, and we need to preserve it for future generations to come."

"The Farmington River was here long before us and we must ensure it stays clean and free-flowing for the next generation to enjoy," said Blumenthal. "This proposal adds key resources to that enduring fight and we are fortunate as a delegation to have such strong partners in the local advocates and officials who made this day possible."

"This bill will provide much-needed funding to help preserve one of our region's most valuable and critical natural bodies of water: the Farmington River," Larson said. "From Nancy Johnson, myself, Joe Lieberman and Chris Dodd in past sessions to Chris Murphy and Richard Blumenthal today, this has been a long-term bipartisan effort to ensure that the beauty of the Farmington River will be preserved for generations to come. Time and again our delegation, especially Senator Lieberman, has been proven to be national leaders in the defense of our environment. I want to thank all of the community leaders and elected officials who came out today in support of this bill as we look forward to helping push its passage through Congress."

"This bill will help protect the beauty, ecological diversity, and recreational opportunities on 62 miles of the Farmington River for generations to come by preserving its treasured natural values — and provide tens of thousands of dollars in Park Service grants," said Murphy. "To the local advocates, town, community, and state leaders, and my colleagues here today — thank you for coming together to help keep Connecticut beautiful."

The bill is the product of a bi-partisan, community-driven process begun nearly a decade ago, when these ten towns came together to protect the Lower Farmington River. The towns have partnered with federal lawmakers to finally make the designation a reality. The upper portion of the river was given protected status in 1994.

Congress created the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in 1968 to slow the rate at which the country's rivers were being dammed and degraded by development. The designation is designed for those rivers with "outstanding resource values" (scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, or cultural) to ensure that they remain free-flowing.

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