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MEMBER
Bi-State L.I. Sound Marine Resource Committee
N.Y.S. Biodiversity Research Institute

November 2, 2009

RE: Community-based Marine Debris Removal Project Grants FY2010

Dear Members of the Review Committee,

I write in support of the application of Coastal Steward for the Community-based Marine Debris Removal Project Grants to remove lobster pots, line, and weights that were abandoned when the lobster fishery collapsed in 1999.

Coastal Steward, under the leadership of David Johnson, has worked for over two decades addressing the tremendous problem of marine pollution. This invaluable not-for-profit has organized beach clean-ups and pioneered local beach sponsorship programs. Large numbers of volunteers turn out for their Beach Clean-up events and throughout Coastal Steward's 20 years of experience, over 200 tons of litter and debris have been removed from shoreline ecosystems.

Coastal Steward's experience well-positions this organization to address the collection of abandoned lobster fishing gear including pots. These "ghost pots" threaten the restoration of the lobster industry because they continue to draw in, trap and kill marine life.

Coastal Steward will be working with local lobstermen to perform the task of finding and removing the derelict gear in the Long Island Sound from Port Jefferson, NY and Bridgeport, CT to Orient, NY and Old Saybrook, CT. The average depth they will be working in is 110 feet and the work will be performed in the off season in Feb/March of 2010 and in Oct/Nov of 2011. Useable gear will be recycled and be available to local lobstermen through a free raffle system.

The Town of Brookhaven will partner with Coastal Steward by supplying dumpsters and waiving landfill fees. They will also provide a temporary fenced in area to store gear prior to raffling off to lobstermen.

I support Coastal Steward's proposal and encourage your kind consideration of this worthwhile proposal.

Sincerely,