



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lee M. Zeldin

## Senator Lee Zeldin Secures Repeal of the Saltwater Fishing License Fee

LEE M. ZELDIN March 24, 2011

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*Agreement in the 2011-2012 State Budget*

**Albany, NY-** State Senator Lee M. Zeldin (R, C, I- Shirley) announced today a three way agreement on his efforts to repeal the Saltwater Fishing License Fee.

“In recent days, during Budget negotiations, there have been productive discussions between leaders from the Senate, Assembly and Governor’s office with regards to the repeal of the

Saltwater Fishing License Fee,” said Senator Zeldin.

“This is a piece of legislation that is very important to the needs of my district,” continued Zeldin. “I am very pleased to announce that there is a negotiated three-way agreement to replace the Saltwater Fishing License Fee with a free registry.” New Jersey has also recently enacted a free registry.

Senator Zeldin had introduced the bill, a campaign promise, to repeal the Saltwater Fishing License Fee (S.3638) just a month ago. He has been working the halls of the Capitol to bring a broad coalition together to fight for its repeal.

“I would like to thank not only my Senate and Assembly colleagues who spent hours listening to me and working with me, but I would also like to thank the thousands of fishermen, including the Recreational Fishing Alliance, who called, wrote, faxed and signed our petition,” stated Senator Zeldin.

The agreement will be effective immediately (there will be no 180 day lag) and includes the following:

- Full refund of the lifetime license fee (\$150) with no reduction to the balance of the Conservation Fund;
- An additional \$1.9 Million in General Fund support for Marine Bureau operations. The Marine Bureau will not be responsible for paying for jobs it assumed responsibility for in 2009;
- Full compliance with the Federal Saltwater Fishing Program. New Yorkers will not have to purchase a separate Federal License.

The Conservation Fund balance on April 1, 2011 will be \$22.2 million. Zeldin was pleased to note that on April 1, 2012, the projected balance of this fund will be \$38.2 Million.

Assemblyman Fred Thiele (I- Sag Harbor) stated, "The idea of a Saltwater Fishing license was ill-conceived from the outset. Not only was it a tax on one of the fundamental rights that Long Island residents have had since colonial times, but it was a burden to the recreational fishing industry at a time when the recession was taking its toll on the local economy. This action will send a message that the State recognizes that the right to fish should be free and that recreational fishing is a critical part of the Long Island economy. I would also like to thank Eric Shultz and the Southampton Trustees and Diane McNally and the East Hampton Trustees for their determined opposition to the license. Their leadership helped to protect our rights and convince the Legislature that the license should be repealed. As always, it was a pleasure working with them."

"Recreational and commercial saltwater fishing is one of the many great things about Long Island," concluded Zeldin. "It's part of our history, and for many, it's the reason why we live here. I cannot think of a better way to start the new fishing season off than with this great news. It's a bright, sunny day for saltwater fishermen."

Senator Zeldin will be hosting an event with Saltwater fishermen to kickoff the new 2011 summer fishing season next month.