



\*to be approved October 28, 2026

**Peconic Estuary Partnership**  
**Policy Committee Meeting**  
**April 29, 2026**  
**10am – 12:30pm**

**LOCATION: \*Note change\***

Riverhead Town Hall: Board Room

[4 W 2nd St, Riverhead, NY 11901](#)

Find briefing materials link: On [PEP DataHub](#) & [Google Drive](#)

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://stonybrook.zoom.us/j/95360699129?pwd=jHu3E9isEpKbSnKpOUi4fBJyjonbaq.1&jst=2>

**Agenda:**

**10:00** Welcome & Introductions: *Jennifer Juengst, Deputy Commissioner, Suffolk County*  
*Roll call was conducted. A quorum was established. See attendees at end of minutes.*

**10:05** Review of October 29, 2025 Meeting Minutes

**Action:** *PC approval of meeting minutes from October 29, 2025*

**Vote:** *Kevin McDonald made a motion, seconded by Jennifer Juengst. All members voted in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.*

**10:10** PEP new staff introductions- Joyce Novak, PhD, PEP Executive Director

**10:15:** National Estuary Program Federal Updates: Joyce Novak, PhD, Executive Director  
*Joyce Novak provided updates on National Estuary Program (NEP) reauthorization efforts. The American Water Stewardship Act has passed the House, and reauthorization is anticipated through the Water Resources Development Act, extending authorization through 2031.*

*Discussion included:*

- *Current authorization remains capped at \$1 million per program and \$50 million nationally*
- *FY26 appropriations have been approved and FY27 funding discussions are ongoing*
- *Federal appropriations include support for the Coastal Watershed Grant program*
- *Congressional support for estuary and resilience-related funding initiatives*

*Updates were also provided on the IJA-funded CHANGES project focused on enhanced coastal resilience using combinations of shellfish, eelgrass, and kelp. Discussion emphasized site suitability analysis, wave attenuation, monitoring, and scaling nature-based shoreline approaches throughout the estuary.*

*Committee discussion included:*

- *Request for congressionally designated funding to expand from the original project sites to conduct site evaluation at additional locations across the North Fork*
- *Use of previous restoration and monitoring efforts in Shinnecock Bay to inform implementation*
- *Questions regarding site selection, prioritization, and opportunities for future funding*

*A future meeting dedicated to the CHANGES project will be scheduled.*

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**10:30:** PEP Financial updates: Joyce Novak, PhD, Executive Director

*Discussion of federal, state, and local funding included:*

- EPA funding is currently at \$850,000 annually, with requests to increase to \$1 million
- State funding levels and proposed increases in the House budget
- Suffolk County FY26 funding allocations, including office space support
- Status of SC FY21–22 closeouts and active FY23–25 awards
- IJA funding timelines and expenditure progress
- Request for a no-cost extension for Year 1–3 IJA funding
- Suffolk County Capital investments supporting water quality monitoring and wetland concept planning
- Shelter Island wetland concept planning efforts
- Bond Act match funding associated with Upper Mills Dam fish passage planning

*Discussion addressed contracting delays and project expenditure timelines associated with IJA implementation.*

**10:45:** FY26 Workplans Review and Discussion

### **Suffolk County Workplan (FY24 & FY25) Amendment**

*Discussion focused on proposed amendments reallocating funding toward a targeted oyster aquaculture microgrant program supporting growers impacted by severe winter conditions.*

*Discussion included:*

- Replacement of damaged gear and purchase of Long Island spat
- Requirements for gear tagging and tracking
- Potential incorporation of best management practices and resilience standards
- Alignment with existing USDA and county-supported programs
- Importance of supporting ecosystem services provided by shellfish aquaculture
- Concerns regarding long-term sustainability of future funding assistance

*Discussion also addressed continued SAV monitoring and clarification that previous priorities were not being abandoned but addressed through revised strategies.*

*Discussion included future consideration of resilient gear practices and educational materials for the aquaculture industry.*

### **Suffolk County FY26**

*Discussion included:*

- Water quality monitoring and HAB monitoring in priority embayments
- Nutrient reduction outreach and USGS monitoring stations
- Eelgrass refugia monitoring and seagrass aerial mapping
- East Hampton clam sanctuary monitoring and capacity-building efforts
- Diamondback terrapin telemetry and habitat work

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- *Community engagement and outreach initiatives under the PRAE Act*
- *Ongoing mini-grant programming and outreach videos*
- *Stormwater management projects, including permeable pavement initiatives*

#### **Stony Brook University FY26**

*Discussion included:*

- *Program office budget allocations*
- *Local travel and conference participation*
- *Program evaluation planning*
- *Clean water projects, including thermal imagery and subaqueous groundwater discharge mapping*
- *Groundtruthing thermal imagery to support eelgrass restoration and refugia identification*
- *Continued monitoring and long-term evaluation of restoration success*
- *Seagrass restoration strategies and regional coordination efforts*

#### **Action: Policy Committee approves Suffolk County FY24 & FY25 amendments**

**Vote:** Kevin McDonald made a motion, seconded by Jennifer Juengst. All members voted in favor. None opposed. Motion approved. EPA conditionally approves, pending revised workplan(s) submission to Region 2.

#### **Action: Policy Committee approves the Suffolk County FY26 Workplan**

**Vote:** Kevin McDonald made a motion, seconded by Cathy Haas. All members voted in favor. None opposed. Motion approved. EPA conditionally approves, pending workplan submission to Region 2 and grants office review

#### **Action: Policy Committee approves the Stony Brook University FY26 Workplan**

**Vote:** Kevin McDonald made a motion, seconded by Jennifer Juengst. All members voted in favor. None opposed. Motion approved. EPA conditionally approves, pending workplan submission to Region 2 and grants office review.

#### **11:30 PEP CCMP 5-Year review**

*Minor revisions were identified to align with updated federal language and remove projects no longer moving forward.*

*The Communications Strategy was presented as complete following recommendations from the Management Committee.*

*Discussion included:*

- *Importance of adequately funding the implementation of the Communications Strategy*
- *Linking communications efforts to measurable environmental outcomes*
- *Use of outreach to highlight successful projects and implementation efforts*
- *EPA administrative updates regarding CCMP approval delegation*

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**Action: Policy Committee approves PEP Communications Strategy**

**Vote:** Kevin McDonald made a motion, seconded by Al Krupski. All members voted in favor. None opposed. EPA conditionally approves, pending submission to Region 2, and concurrence with EPA HQs. Motion approved.

**11:40** PEP Updates

PEP Committee Updates

- Local Government Committee, **Michael Iasilli, Chair**

*Provided updates on:*

- Southampton Town approval of PEP FY26 budget
  - Southampton CPF water quality projects
  - Flood mitigation coordination with the Highway Department
  - Adoption of Southampton dock restrictions within the Peconics
  - Land disturbance ordinance updates addressing aquifer protection gaps
- Discussion included impacts of winter conditions on dock infrastructure and bay bottoms.*

Citizens Advisory Committee, **Kevin McDonald, Chair**

*Updates included:*

- Coordination between the CAC and Local Government Committee
- Septic improvement discussions
- State proposals related to streamlining environmental review processes
- Concerns regarding reduced environmental review requirements for development projects

*Committee discussion emphasized the importance of local government engagement and coordinated responses to proposed regulatory changes.*

Technical Advisory Committee, **Matt Sclafani, PhD. Chair**

*Steve Heck provided updates on behalf of Matt Sclafani.*

*Discussion included:*

- Potential formation of a shellfish restoration workgroup
- SeagrassNET and SeagrassRAPID efforts
- Diamondback terrapin research
- Microplastics and HAB updates
- Ongoing habitat and restoration coordination efforts

**Program Office provided updates on:**

- Goose Creek discharge elimination project completion
- Meetinghouse Creek stormwater and flood reduction project
- Broad Cove and Havens Beach restoration projects
- CHANGES project implementation progress



PROTECTING AND RESTORING LONG ISLAND'S PECONIC BAYS

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- *Southampton bulkhead removal planning and upcoming public hearing*
- *I/A wastewater treatment system maintenance grants*
- *SeagrassNET expansion and NOAA chart integration*
- *Alewife monitoring and fish passage planning*
- *Bridal Falls eel ladder plan for installation*
- *Bond Act funding pursuits for Upper Mills Dam*
- *Outreach initiatives, including Horseshoe Crab monitoring, monofilament collection, mini-grants, and homeowner rewards programs*

**12:00** Public Portion / Additional Comments

*Discussion reflected on increased staffing, funding, and project implementation capacity since the adoption of the updated CCMP.*

**Action: Motion to adjourn.**

**Vote:** *Jennifer Juengst made a motion, seconded by Kevin McDonald. All members voted in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.*

**The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:04 PM.**

**Meeting Attendees:**

**PEP Policy Committee Members Present (\*zoom):**

**Chair: Jennifer Juengst** (Suffolk County Executive Office)

**\*Cathy Haas**, Regional Director (NYS DEC, Region 1)

**\*Al Krupski**, Supervisor, Town of Southold (Local Government Representative) *Arrival approx. 1030a- present for votes thereafter.*

**Kevin McDonald**, (Citizens Advisory Committee Chair)

**\*Javier Laureano**, Water Division Director (EPA Region 2)

**Additional Attendees (in person):**

Michael Flood (EPA); Liz Butler (EPA); Chris Clapp (PEP CAC Co-Chair); Stephen Jeck (PEP TAC Co-chair); Greg Doroski (SC Legislator D1); Maryann Eddy (Sag Harbor); Samantha Klein (TNC); Jade Blennau (PEP); Joyce Novak (PEP); Marissa Velasquez (PEP); Jill Moretto (PEP); Stephanie Reifschneider(PEP); Hannah Collins (PEP); Rachel Friedman (PEP)

**Additional Attendees (via Zoom):**

Vanessa Rojano, (Suffolk County D2 Legislator's Office); Michael Iasilli (PEP LGC); Cate Rogers (East Hampton); Joseph Sanzano (SC Planning & Econ Development); Shauna Kamath (NYSDEC-DMR)