

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 30, 2017

The Honorable John Boozman
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
128 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Boozman and Ranking Member Tester:

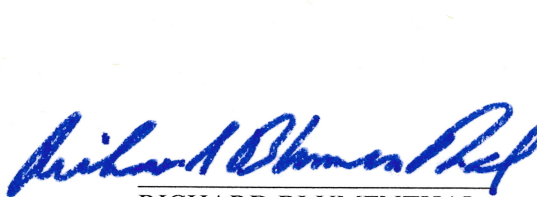
As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 appropriations bill for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, we write urging you to repeal a misguided, outdated mandate that was included in appropriations bills in previous Congresses. This mandate required DHS to sell Plum Island, a small island in Long Island Sound that has long been used for federal animal research efforts. Plum Island is also home to pristine beaches, miles of natural shoreline, and critical habitats for hundreds of types of plants and animals. The forced sale must be repealed.

For decades, Plum Island housed an animal research laboratory known as the Plum Island Animal Disease Center. Several years ago, Congress authorized the creation of a new replacement facility in Kansas. In order to pay for the new facility, Congress required DHS to sell Plum Island in a public sale. It is imperative the sale requirement be repealed for two critical reasons. First, the sale will no longer serve the purpose for which it was intended. We support the transition to the new facility, but the Kansas location has since been funded and no longer needs the revenue that would come from a sale of Plum Island. Second, Plum Island and its boundless natural treasures must remain free from developers so they can instead be preserved for future generations. By repealing the sale we can take away the threat of private development while continuing to work with our colleagues to craft an alternative, long-term path for this precious resource that allows it to remain with the federal government or a responsible entity as a park or preserve in perpetuity.

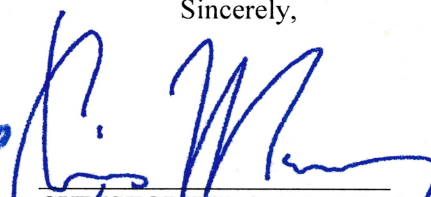
This issue is germane to your subcommittee's work and next year's spending bill, as the sale was included in appropriations legislation in years past. Our request can be achieved by including language that repeals Section 540 of title V of division D of the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009 (P.L. 110-329) and section 538 of title V of division D of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-74).

We thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senate



KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
United States Senate