

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6064

To rename the Oyster Bay National Wildlife Refuge as the Congressman
Lester Wolff National Wildlife Refuge.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 8, 2018

Mr. SUOZZI introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on Natural Resources

A BILL

To rename the Oyster Bay National Wildlife Refuge as the
Congressman Lester Wolff National Wildlife Refuge.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 The Congress finds the following:

5 (1) The Oyster Bay National Wildlife Refuge
6 was created in 1968. It is located on the north shore
7 of Long Island in eastern Nassau County, is the
8 largest refuge in the Long Island National Wildlife
9 Refuge Complex, and receives the most public use of
10 all the refuges in the Complex.

1 (2) The State of New York designated Oyster
2 Bay a significant coastal fish and wildlife habitat. It
3 is especially important for wintering waterfowl such
4 as black duck, greater scaup, bufflehead, canvasback
5 and long-tailed ducks. Management activities include
6 wetland restoration and protection of the natural
7 shoreline and vegetation.

8 (3) The refuge is unique in consisting solely of
9 bay bottom and adjacent shoreline up to the mean
10 high-tide mark. Ninety percent of New York's com-
11 mercial oyster harvest comes from the refuge. Visi-
12 tors enjoy fishing, wildlife observation, photography
13 and environmental education. The refuge is truly a
14 national treasure.

15 (4) Many visitors are unaware that were it not
16 for the tireless work and advocacy of then-freshman
17 Congressman Lester Wolff, this area would today be
18 an 8.5-mile causeway and bridge across Long Island
19 Sound between Oyster Bay and Rye, New York, con-
20 necting Nassau and Westchester Counties.

21 (5) The bridge was first proposed by Robert
22 Moses, the well-known New York City Planner, to
23 divert traffic from New York City. Former Governor
24 Nelson Rockefeller signed into law legislation cre-

1 ating the bridge authorized by the New York State
2 Legislature in 1967.

3 (6) Congressman Wolff, elected in 1964, quick-
4 ly decided the bridge would be an intrusion in a pris-
5 tine area, and that Long Island Sound was a very
6 precious resource that was despoiled. The conserva-
7 tion threats in the mid-1960s were suburban devel-
8 opment, wetland filling, and industrial pollution. The
9 fight to preserve this land became an enormous po-
10 litical fight and is considered to be a turning point
11 in New York State's environmental legacy.

12 (7) With State and local political and commu-
13 nity leaders, and especially the North Shore leaders
14 and the Committee to Save the Long Island Sound,
15 Congressman Wolff arranged a meeting with De-
16 partment of the Interior representatives and local
17 leaders where the idea of creating a wildlife refuge
18 from municipal and privately owned wetlands was
19 created.

20 (8) The Town of Oyster Bay, in which one end
21 of the bridge was to be located, deeded 5,000 acres
22 of wetlands to the United States to be maintained
23 as a Federal wildlife preserve. It was stipulated that
24 if the Department of the Interior agreed to an intru-
25 sion of the property, it would revert to the town.

1 Creating a Federal wildlife preserve provided the
2 land with Federal protection.

3 (9) Because of the vision, dedication, and perse-
4 verance of Congressman Lester Wolff, all of us and
5 future generations can enjoy the beauty and mag-
6 nificence of this refuge.

7 **SEC. 2. RENAMING THE OYSTER BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE**
8 **REFUGE AS THE CONGRESSMAN LESTER**
9 **WOLFF NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.**

10 (a) RENAMING.—The unit of the National Wildlife
11 Refuge System known as the Oyster Bay National Wildlife
12 Refuge and located near Oyster Bay, New York, shall be
13 known as the “Congressman Lester Wolff National Wild-
14 life Refuge”.

15 (b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, reg-
16 ulation, document, paper, or other record of the United
17 States to the unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System
18 known as the Oyster Bay National Wildlife Refuge is
19 deemed to be a reference to the “Congressman Lester
20 Wolff National Wildlife Refuge”.

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