



A Robinson+Cole Legal Update

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Long Island Sound Blue Plan

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On May 14, 2021, the Connecticut State Senate unanimously approved the [Long Island Sound Blue Plan](#) (Blue Plan). The Connecticut House of Representatives approved the plan in late April; the effect of the Senate's action makes the Blue Plan effective immediately. The adoption of the Blue Plan is the end result of a process that was started in 2015 with the enactment of Public Act 15-66, "An Act Concerning a Long Island Sound Blue Plan and Resource and Use Inventory."

With an area of 1,320 square miles, Long Island Sound (Sound) is Connecticut's largest and most important natural resource, home to more than 120 species of finfish and countless varieties of birds and other wildlife. Connecticut regulates coastal uses and development and protects the state's coastal resources through its Coastal Management Program. The Blue Plan is a marine-spatial planning initiative, one that will supplement the Coastal Management Program's existing authority but will not create any new regulatory restrictions, although the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection must take the Blue Plan into consideration when making permitting decisions under the state's coastal permitting programs. In addition, it is anticipated that the Blue Plan also will become part of the enforceable policies in the state's coastal management program under the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act.

The Blue Plan was prepared by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in partnership with the Blue Plan Advisory Committee, along with extensive input from stakeholders, researchers and the public. More information on the Blue plan can be found [here](#).

Based on science and the present understanding of the marine environment, including the impact of climate change and the need to adapt to sea level rise, the Blue Plan is intended to prioritize the protection of existing natural resources and uses such as fishing, aquaculture, and navigation from future conflicting or incompatible activities, and to minimize conflicts between marine life and human uses in the Sound. The Blue Plan also provides an inventory of the natural resources and current uses of Long Island Sound through the [Blue Plan Map Viewer](#). The inventory is a resource to help guide future use and development in the Sound. Through its place-based siting priorities, environmental standards and science-based management practices, the Blue Plan is intended to support both water-dependent uses and the marine environment, and foster sustainable uses, activities and habitats to protect the Sound's future environmental and economic vitality, as well as help preserve the traditional connections to the Sound that matter to people.

The Blue Plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every five years, based upon the most current science and information. The Blue Plan Advisory Committee also must continue to hold at least

one public hearing per year to receive comments and submissions from the public on the plan and the inventory.

If you have questions about the Blue Plan or Connecticut's coastal management program and permitting requirements, Robinson+Cole's coastal resources team is available to assist and advise you.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact any member of Robinson+Cole's [Coastal Resources](#) team listed below:

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