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DEEP, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Congresswoman DeLauro Launch World's First Full-Size Solar/Electric Pumpout Boat in Branford

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, along with the Town of Branford and East Shore District Health Department today launched the world's first full-size solar/electric pumpout boat which will be used to remove recreational boat sewage from vessels in the Branford River and Branford Harbor starting next Spring.

"The construction of this vessel right here in Connecticut by one of our Clean Vessel Act Partners and a Clean Marina has not only created local green construction jobs, but also has set a new green standard for how work vessels such as this can be powered using clean, renewable energy," said DEEP Commissioner Rob Klee. "This partnership between the US Fish and Wildlife Service, DEEP, the Town of Branford, the East Shore District Health Department, Yale University and Safe Harbor Marinas embodies everything that we strive for here at DEEP – clean water, clean air, energy efficiency, a healthy marine manufacturing economy, and innovative use of new technology to keep Connecticut businesses competitive."

"The new solar-powered pump-out boat is a great achievement. The first of its kind in the world, it is made possible by federal, state, and local partners working together to achieve results for the people and communities we represent," said Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro. "The boat will not only help keep the Long Island Sound sewage free, but will also serve as an example of how we can reduce our carbon footprint across the Sound. By using green energy to power environmental solutions and empowering local innovation with federal dollars, we are making government work for people, as we must."

"Clean Vessel Act funding is critical to ensuring that our nation's waterways remain safe and clean for both people and wildlife," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Northeast Regional Director Wendi Weber. "We are proud to partner with Connecticut DEEP, the fishing and boating industry, and sportsmen and women to invest in facilities that help protect the health of our lakes, rivers, and oceans."

"This is a historic moment for our local shoreline communities, our state and our country in our efforts to reduce our carbon print foot emissions. Working in collaboration with our many partners, we had a local vision that turned into a reality. Today we the proud owners of the world's first full size solar-electric pump-out boat. This vessel not only protects our local marine recreational beaches and shellfish/kelp farm beds, but it also addresses the very real issue of climate change that is impacting Connecticut's Coastal communities," said Michael Pascucilla ESDHD Director of Health.

The vessel was constructed for the Town of Branford and East Shore District Health Department by Safe Harbor Marinas/Pilot's Point Marina in Westbrook, creating local green jobs and utilizing state-of-the-art solar/electric technology to make the pumpout boat service efficient, quiet and green. The vessel is berthed at Safe Harbor Marinas/Bruce and Johnson's Marina in Branford, and offers free pumpout service to boaters in the Branford River and Branford Harbor.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides financial assistance to states through the Clean Vessel Act. This funding is used to build and maintain pumpout stations, pumpout boats, and dumping stations that enable recreational boaters to dispose of their sewage in a safe and responsible fashion, thus keeping it out of the nation's waterways.

The vessel was constructed with a 75% Federal Clean Vessel Act grant of \$152,383.50 and a 25% matching amount raised by the East Shore District Health Department through local fundraising from generous donors and partners.