

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 263

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 4, 2019

Mr. SUOZZI (for himself, Mr. ROSE of New York, Mr. KING of New York, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. MENG, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. ENGEL, Mrs. LOWEY, and Mr. TONKO) 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 Oyster Bay 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

1 Refuge Complex, and receives the most public use of
2 all the refuges in the Complex.

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

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

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

23 (5) The bridge was first proposed by Robert
24 Moses, the well-known New York City Planner, to
25 divert traffic from New York City. Former Governor

1 Nelson Rockefeller signed into law legislation cre-
2 ating the bridge authorized by the New York State
3 Legislature in 1967.

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

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

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

1 sion of the property, it would revert to the town.
2 Creating a Federal wildlife preserve provided the
3 land with Federal protection.

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

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

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

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

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