

**The Honorable Nick LaLota**  
**Statement for the Record**  
**House Natural Resources Committee**  
Member Day Hearing  
Wednesday, October 11, 2023

---

Thank you,

- Chairman Westerman,
- Ranking Member Grijalva, and
- all of the Members of this Committee

for hosting today's Member Day hearing – allowing Members like me to speak about legislation that means so much to folks back home in my district and across all of Long Island.

Today, I am here to discuss the critical importance of my legislation: H.R. 1584 – the Plum Island National Monument Act and to urge all Members and this Committee to support it.

For those who have not had the privilege of visiting the eastern end of Long Island – Plum Island is located in Southold Township, three miles from Orient Point – the furthest point east on the North Fork of Long Island.

In 1954, the Plum Island Animal Disease Center was established on Plum Island and managed by the United States Department of Agriculture. Almost a half-century later, in 2002, the Department of Homeland Security was tasked with continuing the operation.

For decades, the laboratory at the Animal Disease Center conducted important research on foreign animal diseases and worked to prevent the introduction and spread of those diseases in the United States. I am extremely proud of the work the Center has done, however, the Center's time on Plum Island is quickly coming to a close.

In 2005, the Plum Island Animal Disease Center was ordered to close and relocate to Manhattan, Kansas. At the time, the Department of Homeland Security was required by law to sell Plum Island to the highest bidder, but several years ago, Congress was successful in stopping the sale.

While much has been done to ensure the island's environmental and ecological makeup, we must collectively work together to preserve Plum Island once and for all. My legislation – H.R. 1584, the Plum Island National Monument Act would do just that by designating Plum Island as a national monument.

Animal lovers and conservation leaders have sighted over 228 bird species on Plum Island and the surrounding area, including

- birds-of-prey,
- shorebirds,
- wading birds,
- waterfowl, and
- songbird species.

There are also several rare plant species found on the island, including

- Scotch loveage,
- slender knotweed,
- sea-beach knotweed,
- rare species of orchids, such as
  - Spring Ladies' Tresses, and
  - carnivorous plants.

Over the past 10 months, I've spoken to hundreds of constituents and advocacy groups on the important work that is ahead to preserve Plum Island, and I will continue my work to do just that.

Thank you again,

- Chairman Westerman,
- Ranking Member Grijalva, and
- Members of this Committee

for having me today. I urge all of you to support my legislation and I yield back.