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**LANGEVIN, COURTNEY PROPOSE
PAWCATUCK RIVER STUDY**

WARWICK , RI - Congressmen Jim Langevin and Joe Courtney today introduced federal legislation to conduct a study on the “wild and scenic” values of the Pawcatuck River and other important streams in Washington County and southeast Connecticut. Once the study is complete, the rivers could be eligible for federal environmental restoration and conservation funding. Protecting natural areas in this watershed will also mitigate the impacts of floods, absorbing runoff and releasing it slowly over time.

“We are pleased to announce this important legislation for our districts on Earth Day,” said Langevin. “Initiating this study is an important first step towards increasing the financial support for the conservation of our finite freshwater resources in this rapidly growing area. This legislation is especially timely in the wake of recent flooding along the Pawcatuck.”

The legislation is supported by the State of Rhode Island’s Department of Environmental Management, the State of Connecticut’s Department of Environmental Protection, the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association, The Nature Conservancy, and Save the Bay. Each town in the watershed also has indicated their support for this study. The study would be done in conjunction with the National Park Service which oversees the Wild and Scenic program. The study is expected to take about three years to complete.

Congressman Courtney praised the area’s scenic and recreational values. “These rivers are cherished places to paddle and fish, and we hope that one day the official recognition of these values will provide much needed funding to secure access, protect river corridors, and restore degraded habitats.” The watershed is designated by US EPA as a “sole source aquifer” and supplies drinking water for thousands of Rhode Island and Connecticut citizens.

Hundreds of rivers have been designated as Wild and Scenic nationally, although most are in the western states and Alaska. Two Connecticut and Massachusetts rivers were officially recognized by this program in 2009: the Eight Mile River in southeastern Connecticut and the Taunton River in southeastern Massachusetts. For more information, visit Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association’s website at www.wpwa.org