

# Romaine, Bonner Sponsor Legislation to Join East End Lawsuit Opposing Salt Water Fishing License

posted on 10/7/2009 3:17:18 PM

**FARMINGVILLE, NY** - Brookhaven Town Council Members Keith Romaine and Jane Bonner are co-sponsoring a resolution to have the Town of Brookhaven join the Towns of East Hampton, Southampton and Shelter Island in a lawsuit opposing New York State's new marine fishing license.

"I am opposed to the fishing tax," said Councilman Keith Romaine, "and will have the Town of Brookhaven join the East End townships in their court case to oppose this intrusion into regulation of local waters by Town Trustees."

The new regulation went into effect at the beginning of this month, mandating a state license for the first time ever on saltwater fishing. As of October 1, 2009, anyone 16 years of age and older wishing to fish in the marine and coastal district must have a recreational marine fishing license, according to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

However, because of a lawsuit brought by three East End towns based upon the Dongan Patent and a subsequent temporary restraining order, the license is currently not enforceable in Southampton, East Hampton, and Shelter Island. Council members Romaine and Bonner are introducing their resolution to have Brookhaven join this lawsuit, based on the Patent issued to Brookhaven by Colonial Governor Thomas Dongan.

"This new 'license' is nothing more than a hidden tax designed to raise \$4 million to plug the gaping hole in Governor Paterson's state budget on the backs of our residents and their families," said Councilwoman Bonner.

The Dongan Patent for the Town of Brookhaven, issued by Governor Dongan, is the historic and legal document that provided the foundation for Brookhaven Town government. Issued in 1686, it granted the rights to all waterways, ponds, streams, brooks, wetlands, rivers and other estuaries, as trustees for the early settlers and for residents today. To this day, the Dongan Patent is used to resolve many legal questions involving preservation of natural resources and our underground water supply, as well as the free and common usage of our waterways.

Romaine and Bonner's resolution will be introduced to the Town Board at their October 8 work session, and will be voted upon at the October 13 Town Board meeting.

## **Division of Public Information \* Office of the Town Council**

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