

Great Lakes Hill Happenings

JANUARY 2015

UPCOMING EVENTS

Asian Carp 2014 and 2015: Great Lakes and Beyond
Tuesday, Feb. 24
10-11:00 AM
Longworth House Office Building, Room 1310

Federal Support for Effective Practices at Every Stage of the Business Life Cycle
Wednesday, Feb. 25
10:30am-12:00pm
Capitol Visitor Center, SVC 215

Great Lakes Congressional Breakfast
Thursday, Feb. 26
8:15-9:45 AM
Senate Hart Office Building, Room 902

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Great Lakes Bipartisan Efforts Continue in the 114th Congress

The Great Lakes Task Forces have been active since the beginning of the 114th Congress. Efforts have included election of two new co-chairs; letters supporting Great Lakes priorities; introduction of Great Lakes-relevant legislation; and presence at early-February events, like the Northeast-Midwest Regional Reception and the Great Lakes Summit.

Great Lakes Task Force Transitions

Following the retirements of two Great Lakes Task Force co-chairs, Sen. Carl Levin (MI) and Rep. John Dingell (MI-12), the Great Lakes Task Forces have elected new leadership.

In the Senate, Sen. Debbie Stabenow (MI) will take over as the Democratic co-chair, joining Sen. Mark Kirk (IL), the continuing Republican co-chair. Sen. Stabenow has led on efforts, including the Farm Bill and related conservation programs, the Great Lakes

Restoration Initiative, and Asian carp and other invasive species.

On the House side, Rep. Marcy Kaptur (OH-09) announced her assumption of the co-chair position at the NEMWI's Great Lakes Environmental Summit. A leader on Asian carp and harmful algal bloom issues, Rep. Kaptur brings leadership on the appropriations committee, where she

serves as the lead Democrat on the Energy and Water Subcommittee with jurisdiction over funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Sen. Stabenow and Rep. Kaptur join a long line of over 20 years of Great Lakes Task Force leadership.





Harmful Algal Bloom near Toledo, Ohio, August, 2014. Photo courtesy of NOAA

Legislative Updates

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act (H.R. 223): Co-sponsors include Great Lakes Task Force Members Reps. David (OH-14) and Sander Levin (MI-09), and Co-Chairs Reps. Louise Slaughter (NY-25), Marcy Kaptur (OH-09), and Candice Miller (MI-10). Authorizes the GLRI program at \$300 m through FY2020.

Drinking Water Protection Act (H.R. 212): Co-sponsors include Rep. Bob Latta (OH-05), Great Lakes Task Force Co-Chairs Reps. Candice Miller (MI-10) and Marcy Kaptur (OH-09), and Member Rep. Mike Quigley (IL-05). Requires a strategic plan within 90 days to address human health risks, including recommendations on monitoring and treating algal toxins. Additionally, the bill requires a GAO report on federal spending on public health efforts.

Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (S. 373): Sets a national standard for ballast water management and discharge under the U.S. Coast Guard with consultation with the EPA. Similar to last year's bill, it removes regulation of ballast water from under the Clean Water Act, and implements a permanent exemption for small vessels from discharge regulation. There are not currently any Great Lakes members among the bill's sponsors.

"The GLNS is the backbone of our nation's manufacturing, industrial, building, and agricultural economies."

"... a backlog of unmet navigation system maintenance remains across the Great Lakes."

Great Lakes Navigation System Letter

Great Lakes Congressional members, led by the Great Lakes Task Force co-chairs, signed letters to Assistant Secretary of the Army, Jo-Ellen Darcy, requesting additional support for maintaining the Great Lakes Navigation System in FY2015. [Led in the House](#) by Reps. Candice Miller (MI-10), Louise Slaughter (NY-25), and Sean Duffy (WI-07) and [in the Senate](#) by Sens. Mark Kirk (IL) and Debbie

Stabenow (MI), the letters requested additional support from the Work Plan funding for maintenance and dredging of the federally-authorizes ports, harbors, and channels within the Great Lakes. The House letter also requested additional support for the Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration program. Eleven Senators and 22 Representatives signed the letters, respectively.

Overall, including FY2015 Congressional Appropriations and Work Plan funding, the Great Lakes Navigation System received \$111.9 m, or about 12.2% of total funding from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund.

BRIEFING RECAP: LNG in Great Lakes Transportation



On Tuesday, January 13, 2015, the NEMWI hosted a Capitol Hill briefing entitled, "Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) in Great Lakes Transportation." Featuring speakers from the Great Lakes Maritime Research Institute, America's Natural Gas Alliance (ANGA), the University of Delaware, and the Rochester Institute

of Technology, the briefing focused on the potential shift of the maritime transportation industry to natural gas to reduce air emissions while maintaining reliability. Dr. Stewart highlighted the many questions the GLMRI research addressed, including environmental emissions impacts, supply chain needs, safety regulations, and costs of the system. Both he and Amy Ferrell of ANGA described the need for multiple modes of transportation to convert to natural gas in order to provide the demand necessary to support infrastructure changes to supply the natural gas to the users. ANGA provided background on their collaborative research efforts in addition to their own study on opportunities for use of natural gas in maritime and rail transportation. Drs. Winebrake and Corbett, of the University of Delaware and Rochester Institute of Technology, respectively,

were on hand to answer questions regarding their emissions studies, which revealed conversion to natural gas from diesel and other fuels leads to lower levels of emissions when considering the full production and use cycle.

The presentations made during the briefing can be found here.

President's FY2016 Budget

The President released his budget on Monday, Feb. 2, 2015. The NEMWI tracks over 60 priority programs for the region, updating numbers and

comparing to previous years on its website here. The Great Lakes Washington Program tracks additional Great Lakes programs, with numbers available here. Notably, the GLRI program request was cut to \$250 m, down from the previous five-year level of around \$300 m per year (excepting

FY2013's sequestration). The Great Lakes Science Center (US Geological Survey) saw a slight uptick in funding for fishery research. Additional funding requests and impacts will be posted.

FY2016 Appropriations

The Great Lakes Task Forces will again circulate letters of support for Great Lakes programs. These letters, signed by fellow members of Congress, are sent to the Appropriations Committee Leadership to signify Congressional support. Led by Rep. Sander Levin (MI-09), David Joyce (OH-14), and Louise Slaughter (NY

-25), a letter supporting \$300 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in FY2016 is currently circulating. This request would maintain current funding for the GLRI program, and be an increase of \$50 million above the President's request. The letter will be open through the Great Lakes Day event.

Check back in the NEMWI Weekly Update and future Hill Happenings for notices on other appropriations letters circulating.



US Geological Survey R/V Sturgeon in port at Navy Pier, Chicago, Illinois.

Great Lakes Note

The Great Lakes Delegation, and its high level of bipartisanship, was recently [featured in the *The Hill*](#). As noted in the article, “... when it comes to protecting the world's largest surface freshwater system — our Great Lakes — bipartisan support not only makes sense, but also seems to be mobilizing.” The Great Lakes Congressional Delegation, led by the Great Lakes Task Force Co-Chairs and Members, has produced multiple pieces of bipartisan legislation and funding decisions, including the GLRI Program, the Great Lakes Navigation System, the Sleeping Bear Dunes Wilderness Act, and public drinking water protections.



The Great Lakes Washington Program advances Great Lakes Protection and Restoration objectives by creating a strong interface between activities of Great Lakes leadership in the region and federal leaders in Washington – particularly Great Lakes Congressional delegation members.

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Strengthening the Region that Sustains the Nation