

Great Lakes Hill Happenings

APRIL 2015

Great Lakes Bipartisan Leaders Come Together

Great Lakes leaders came together to support policy efforts throughout the month of April, including introducing legislation to restore and protect the Great Lakes region; supporting funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to maintain the navigation system and ecosystem; and speaking on behalf of invasive species efforts. The Great Lakes Delegation, lead by the Great Lakes Task Force, continues to provide an example to Congress of how to move forward in a bipartisan and productive fashion.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Legislative Updates	2
FY2016 Appropriations 2016	2
Briefing Recaps	3
Great Lakes Note	4

Great Lakes Task Force Leads on Corps Funding

This week the House passed the spending bill to provide funding for the Department of Energy and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. NEMWI put together a [review of the funding and policy provisions](#) included within the bill. Notably, Great Lakes members, including Great Lakes Task Force Co-Chairs Reps. Sean Duffy (WI-07) and Marcy Kaptur (OH-09), led the way with significant amendments that will provide increased fund-

ing and support to the Great Lakes region. [Rep. Bill Huizenga](#) (MI-02), with the support of Committee Leadership including Rep. Kaptur, led an amendment to increase funding for harbor maintenance from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to levels recommended in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014. This funding ensures harbors, locks and dams, and waterways are maintained for mar-

itime transportation. [Rep. Duffy](#) led an amendment intended to provide \$10 million for the Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration program, to support cost-shared habitat restoration in the region. These efforts have helped to ensure the Great Lakes region is maintained and restored, all through bipartisan cooperation.



Legislative Updates



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

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act (S. 1024): Co-sponsors include Great Lakes Task Force Co-Chairs Sens. Mark Kirk (IL) and Rob Portman (OH). Authorizes the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) program at \$300 m through FY2020. Same bill as introduced in House by Great Lakes Task Force leaders ([H.R. 223](#)) in January.

Great Lakes HAB Coordinator Act (H.R. 1923): Co-sponsors include Reps. Tim Ryan, David Joyce, Marcy Kaptur, and Marcia Fudge, all of Ohio. Requires the EPA to appoint a coordinator to address issues of Harmful Algal Blooms in the Great Lakes.

Great Lakes Nutrient Removal Assistance Act (H.R. 1955): Led by Rep. Brian Higgins (NY-26) and provides funding to upgrade nutrient treatment and removal at wastewater treatment plants.

Protecting Our Great Lakes Act (H.R. 1990): Cosponsors include Rep. Bob Latta (OH-05) and Great Lakes Task Force Co-Chair Rep. Marcy Kaptur (OH-09). Prohibits open lake disposal of dredged materials into Lake Erie within five years without approval by the State. Exemptions for placement in a confined disposal facility or for beneficial reuse are allowed.

FY2016 Appropriations

The House of Representatives has begun its consideration of spending for FY2016. The House has fully considered, amended, and passes bills funding the Department of Energy and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Energy and Water Bill) and the Department of Veterans Administration and Military Construction. Prior to departing for a week's recess,

the House subcommittees released their bills for the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development., as well as its bill for funding the legislative branch (itself). Though the Senate has yet to release any of its draft bills, the Appropriations Committee continues to hold hearings with federal agencies on their budget requests. Senators recently sent a [letter](#) to the Appropriations Committee Leadership, requesting their support of full funding at the Water Resources Reform and Development Act targets for the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, as the amendment offered by Rep. Bill Huizenga (MI-02)

provided for in the House spending bill passed in the last week of April. NEMWI continues to track these efforts and will release updates on funding levels, and policy provisions included in the bills, as they come about through its [Weekly Update](#) and Hill Updates.

Great Lakes Members Highlight Invasive Species Success Stories

On Thursday, April 16, 2015, the NEMWI hosted a Capitol Hill briefing entitled "[Invasive Species Success Stories - They Exist!](#)." Although the discourse regarding invasive species has been doom and gloom, through coordination, research, and federal support, the speakers showed how large investments have led to success in management and control. Many of these efforts originated in the Great Lakes and are being applied in other regions as invasive species spread and new species arrive. Co-Chairs of the Invasive Species Caucus, Reps. Dan Benishek (MI-01) and Mike Thompson (CA-05), kicked off the briefing, noting the wide-ranging impacts of invasive species across the nation as well as

on the federal budget. They noted that a GAO review of federal government spending and initiatives on invasive species -- required by the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 -- is a first step to better understanding and tackling the problem. Great Lakes Task Force Member Rep. Debbie Dingell (MI-12) also joined, noting that invasive species issues, like other Great Lakes issues, are an opportunity for bipartisan efforts. Dr. Marc Gaden with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) discussed the invasion by, management of, and success in controlling sea lamprey in the Great Lakes. The GLFC has reduced the amount of fish killed by sea lamprey by 90% since the fisheries devastation began but will never be able to fully eradicate them, requiring an annual investment of over \$20 million. Dr. Leon Carl with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) highlighted the success of partnerships in combatting invasive species, including zebra and quagga mussels, as well as Asian carp. Through its research and partners, the USGS has developed and tested the use of microparticles, or engineered silver bullets, to manage species. As part of its most recent efforts, the USGS has helped develop

and test Zequanox to target zebra and quagga mussels, which have moved beyond the Great Lakes into the Mississippi River system, inland lakes, and other waters extending into the Western states. Both speakers emphasized that prevention is the easiest and cheapest approach to invasive species management.

The Invasive Species Caucus Co-Chairs, Reps. Benishek and Thompson, joined the Great Lakes Task Force Co-Chairs and Vice Chairs (Sens. Kirk, Stabenow, Portman, and Klobuchar; and Reps. Miller, Kaptur, Duffy, and Slaughter) in serving as honorary co-sponsors of the briefing.

BRIEFING: Nutrient Trading — Can it Help Make the Lake Less Green?

On Monday, April 27, 2015, the NEMWI hosted a Capitol Hill briefing on the potential for nutrient trading to help address nutrient management challenges ([webinar recording](#); [webinar slides](#)). Speakers for the event highlighted the many aspects, challenges, and benefits of nutrient trading, and its potential to improve the health of water resources affected by nutrient pollution. Bruce Knight (Strategic Conservation Partnerships) and Alex Echols (Terra Altus) provided background on the need for innovative solutions to manage nutrients. Brent Fewell (Troutman Sanders, National

Water Quality Trading Alliance) provided details on necessary components and challenges to trading, including trade ratios that require greater projected nutrient reductions from nonpoint sources compared to point sources to account for the uncertainty and weather variability, as well as the need for nutrient trading programs to improve overall water quality. Elin Betanzo (NEMWI) described tools for measuring water quality outcomes of nutrient trading programs and presented preliminary results from NEMWI's upcoming report on water quality monitoring in the Lake Erie drainage basin, noting that large nutrient reduction goals and a five to ten year monitoring timeline are necessary to measure water quality improvements that result from nutrient trading and other nutrient reduction strategies. Victoria Pebbles (Great Lakes Commission) provided attendees with a specific case study, the Fox P Trade pilot, which identifies potential trades between agriculture and point sources, like wastewater treatment plants, to reduce the flow of phosphorus into Green Bay

and, hopefully, make the bay less green. All speakers highlighted the potential for nutrient trading to be part of the solution to nutrient management challenges, whether in the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River, or throughout the country.

The Great Lakes Task Force Co-Chairs and Vice Chairs (Sens. Kirk, Stabenow, Portman, and Klobuchar; and Reps. Miller, Kaptur, Duffy, and Slaughter) served as honorary co-sponsors of the briefing.

Great Lakes Note

Asian carp again made headlines in April—this time CNN, the Today Show, and others took note as a school of carp interrupted Washington University’s crew practice in Missouri.

Check out the [video](#) and look out!



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.

Danielle Chesky
Director, Great Lakes Washington Program
dchesky@nemw.org
202.464.4012



Strengthening the Region that Sustains the Nation